

NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Sheen dairy cows on pasture

Sheen Dairy Farm: Gouverneur, NY

By Lisa McCrory, NODPA News Editor

Located in Northwestern New York in a small town of about 4,000 people, sits a small organic dairy farm that likes to 'keep things simple.' Their uncomplicated approach has earned this farm not one, but two National Milk Quality awards (in 2011 and 2013) from their milk buyer, Horizon Organic. With a total of 600+ farms shipping to Horizon Organic, this is

an award that the Sheens are very proud of.

The Sheens milk about 40 cows year round and own 348 acres of which 200 are tillable and 140 acres are designated for pasture – though all the land could be use for grazing if necessary. Their cows produce about 10,000 lbs of milk/year

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Organic Dairy: Getting Down to Business

2014 NODPA Field Days

September 25 & 26, 2014

Stonewall Farm, Keene, New Hampshire

By Nora Owens,
NODPA Field Days Coordinator

For the second time in NODPA's 14-year history, New Hampshire will host NODPA's Field Days this year. We will gather in Southwestern New Hampshire at Stonewall Farm, in Keene, at the height of the autumn color, on Thursday, September 25th and Friday September 26th. NODPA's Annual Field Days event will offer a rich array of national and regional leaders who will share

their knowledge, ideas, business experience and herd health practices that are essential for running a successful organic dairy business.

This year's program is packed with compelling, practical workshops, a tour of the diverse enterprises at Stonewall Farm, a large trade show, delicious local and organic meals, a social hour, and plenty of time to network with fellow farmers. We are excited to announce that

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the NODPA President

A cold, wet, and late spring has left us scrambling to catch up. In my area, we were at least three weeks behind. On the bright side, it gave us ample opportunities for social bonding as groups of farmers had the time to meet at the local coffee shop to complain about the weather, and in each others' fields to help pull out stuck equipment. I suppose that it is just human nature that brings us together when we feel that we are facing challenges.

We are facing a number of challenges in organic dairy farming these days, and I hope you will put the Annual NODPA Field Days on your calendar. Each year we address different challenges and offer some solutions through the farm tours, workshops and discussions sessions. It is a great time for farmers to come together and learn from each other. This year, the Field Days will be hosted by Stonewall Farm in Keene, New Hampshire

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on September 25th and 26th. With the focus on improving the bottom line and herd health, this will be a time to gain an idea or two, and of course, to meet with old and new friends! I hope to see you there!

Liz Bawden, NODPA President

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NODPA MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance is to enable organic dairy family farmers, situated across an extensive area, to have informed discussion about matters critical to the wellbeing of the organic dairy industry as a whole.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From The NODPA Desk July, 2014

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

The NODPA Field Days is shaping up to be another great opportunity to learn and discuss the key issues that affect organic dairy producers, and the wider implications of what the future holds for the integrity of the organic label. We are fortunate to have both the leader of the USDA National Organic Program, Miles McEvoy, and the newly appointed Chair of the National Organic Standards Board, Jean Richardson, to talk about how they see the future of organic certification, and to answer questions from producers. With all the changes that the USDA is proposing, and the tremendous volume of work that the NOSB faces, this will be a great opportunity for those that don't have the time (or the inclination!) to attend meetings in DC and across the country to hear directly from those who have devoted their lives to organic certification and who will now play key roles in the process of maintaining the integrity of organic certification in the next decade. Dr. Hubert Karreman is no stranger to the NODPA Field Days and to New Hampshire, and we decided to combine Hue's extensive abilities with Dr. Cindy Lankenau's knowledge and experience and use the unique venue of Stonewall Farm to conduct a 'hands-on' workshop on Alternative Cow Care: Chiropractic, Acupuncture, Acupressure. Should be fun and educational!

The NODPA Field Days serves two functions for NODPA. It is a fundraiser that allows us to support all the work we do with publications and the media, plus it provides money for our policy and DC work, including, this year, leading the fight against the organic check-off. It also enables our producer members, near enough to travel, to get together and exchange experiences, challenges, good times & disasters, and provide the emotional support so important to the future of organic family farms. We move the venue around the Northeast to provide that opportunity to as many farm families as possible. This year we have a rich collection of sponsors and supporters and we ask you all to support them as they support our work. This year's Field Days has an exemplary array of workshops and sessions, so please put it on your calendar to attend; we look forward to seeing you all.

In the last issue of the NODPA News we reported on some of the fears that many have about how the USDA has decided not to follow historical precedent or the usual level of transparency and communication with all stakeholders as they change how the NOSB operates. The National Organic Coalition, members of Congress and others have been working with the USDA to present alternatives to 'streamlining' the NOSB process and are talking with USDA about their concerns. A petition has been started to ask President Obama to address the situation by asking him: Don't Let the USDA Undermine the Governance and Integrity of Organic Food and Agriculture with a goal to hit the 100,000 signature threshold by the end of August that the President says will spur a response from the White House. For those interested in signing on to the petition you

can access it at: <https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/president-obama-dont-let-usda-undermine-governance-and-integrity-organic-food-and-agriculture/9q8kG08S>.

Building an effective political voice for organic farmers and ranchers in the United States was the subject of a multi-organization meeting in Washington DC in mid-June. Representatives from organic farming and supporting associations from the East, Midwest, Northwest, South, Upper Great Plains and mountain regions representing approximately 1/3 of organic farmers nationwide attended this exploratory meeting. While many organic farmers belong to organizations that already engage in valuable policy focused coalitions, or that do this work on their own, this group came to the conclusion that there is a need for a national organization representing all organic farmers and ranchers. This organization would be a forum where organic farmers can debate and formulate national organic farm policy reflecting the needs and concerns of organic farmers, plus represent organic farmers' interests and concerns in broader issues where the voice of the organic farmer is needed or desired. Having a place where the media, elected officials, and regulatory agencies can find the undiluted voice of the organic farming community would provide the clout and influence that organic farmers lack at this time. It was not the goal of the exploratory meeting to design a fully developed program, network or organization, but it did discuss many ideas and concepts. This group wants to hear from as many farmers or farmer based organizations as possible from all over the country, and to know if they would be willing to participate in the development of a confederation, network or organization to provide for a strong and effective organic farmer voice in the United States. Please get in touch with me by email, emaltby@comcast.net, if you have an interest in moving the process forward.

Consumers have many choices in the market place and our job is to provide them with the confidence to buy certified organic products, especially when it comes to GMO's. NODPA is a member of the National Organic Coalition (NOC) who recently worked with Congress to send a letter to the FDA making the case for non-GMO labeling to be permitted as part of a GMO labeling guidance that is rumored to be in the works at the FDA. Particularly important in the letter was the argument that foods labeled organic should also be labeled as non-GMO without having to jump through additional hoops and protocols. This is the work that is so important to maintaining the market for organically certified products that is so necessary for a pay price differential that reflects the added production costs and lack of government subsidies for organically certified farming.

In organic dairy it is now cheaper, according to USDA AMS, to import organic powder from New Zealand than it is to make it in the West and ship it across country; it apparently is better to import beef for organic hamburger than to use organic cull cows and it is more cost-effective to import organic grain and feed than to build a sustainable production base in the US by paying a fair price. To quote from an article in WODPA's Integrity newsletter: "To ensure a high quality sustainable organic milk supply, the organic food chain needs to fairly compensate organic dairy producers for those added production costs." ♦

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

“Madre Method” of Calf Rearing

By Phyllis and Paul Van Amburgh, Organic Dairy Farmers, New York

The Madre Method™ is: **the unencumbered suckling of a calf on its own biological dam from birth to the age of 10 months.**

There are three common factors present on all the successful dairy farms: the first is farmers that read and research; second is a good mineral and feed program for cows and soils (or nutrition program, as it may be called when incorporated in a feed ration); and the third is a good heifer program. The farms that do a top-notch job raising their replacements always have healthier cows that perform and last. They suffer far fewer problems with their cows than the ones who don't do a great job or who rely on purchased, unknown, young stock.

Eight years ago we began raising our replacements or replacement heifers one-to-one on their mother. We have tried numerous other methods, but all of these other methods fell short. Most dairy farmers dismiss the technique of cows raising their own, one calf. They fear a financial disaster if they don't sell all the milk from all of their cows.

We have seen that a cow raising her own calf for an entire lactation, as nature designed, is by far the best method of raising calves.

It produces the healthiest, strongest, most disease resistant, and most resilient cows. It is also by far the most economical.

Economy

We will tackle the economics of this method first so that you can feel safe to consider the option. We have to believe that we won't go out of business when we put the milk into a calf rather than into the tank.

In order to understand the economies of this method, we first need a little shift in perspective. Consider that on dairy farms today calves and young stock consume largely one of the following four feeds: co-mingled/bulk tank milk, milk replacer, grain, or corn silage. Prior to these modern feeds, calves had been raised on their mothers for centuries, even for cows of domestic and commercial milk production. The shift to grain and other feeds to replace milk for young stock, really began to take root around WW II, and even then it took decades to become a universal practice. When this practice began in the industry, milk was a premium product, and grain and other inputs were cheap. The shift was an economic decision, and was not meant to improve the rearing process. In fact, great lengths were taken to develop complex rations that were



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Since 1953, the tables have turned. Dairy farmers today are paying high prices for grain (to purchase it as well as to grow it) and sell the milk at a price far less than parity. The feed ration for calves is expensive, and the milk averages at a break-even price. If the milk leaves the farm, then calves must be raised on some sort of replacement. The replacements are inferior, but this fact does not concern the majority of the dairy industry (haulers, marketers, markets, or handlers), just the farmers. The other players are not in the cow business, they just want a lot of milk and it is up to the farmers to figure out the rest. The idea that any food other than mother’s milk The rations dairy farmers feed calves today are expensive and the care we give them is labor intensive. Many of us use resources to collect and cool milk, and then warm it again. Others use cash from selling the milk to purchase milk replacer or to grow or purchase grain or corn. Feeding grain or milk replacer is easier

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Lineback, Speckles, and her two week old devon cross, Ginger.

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Madre Method

continued from page 5

could be better for the calf is propaganda.

to evaluate than letting the calf suckle because we can put it into traditional cash flow and balance sheets. Some farmers see a benefit of feeding real milk over other feedstuffs and they feed their calves milk from the bulk tank or the milk from high SCC cows. This is a sensible method because the milk that is fed is a resource we already have, not one we have to earn cash for in order to purchase. This makes it closer to a profitable model. However, we are still incurring the costs of harvesting the milk, cooling it, then warming it, and we are using labor to feed and care for the calves. If this milk never has to enter the "cost chain" of the milking and labor, such as in a nurse cow system, then we are even closer to optimizing the resource. If a cow nurses her own calf, the farmer is using his/her own resource to invest in his/her own future.

As for true costs, the cost of raising the cow/calf pair is about the same as the cost of feeding one cow in the milk line. So it is the profit from the lactation (diverted from our cash flow) that is "spent" on the calf. I guarantee that on any given farm the profit from one cow's lactation is less than the out of pocket expenses it takes to raise a calf by hand for the first year.

The economic evaluation can't stop here. The impact on cull rate for the herd is also a major factor in evaluating the economy of this method. The health and longevity of cows raised by this method are sig-

nificant. Cull rate is a function of the number of lactations we get from our cows (i.e. two lactations means each cow must be replaced every two years, or half the herd a year, or a 50% cull rate). The more lactations we get from our cows, the lower the cull rate. At our farm we have a cull rate of four percent. That means that for our 65-cow herd, we only need two heifers each year. We can easily afford to let two of the 65 cows raise their calves each year.

Quality of the Livestock

The economy of raising young stock with our Madre Method is important, but the real benefit to our profitability comes by way of the health, vigor, and sheer quality that these replacements achieve.

Consider the benefits to the young calf. The rapid rate of gain is a big advantage for the calf raised by mother. The calves grow at two pounds per day in the first eight weeks, and then skyrocket so that by the time they wean at ten months the average daily gain is between 3 and 4 pounds per day. We achieve these results with no grain fed to the cow or calf, only pasture, hay, balage, and minerals.

The weaned heifer or bull is usually about 60% of its mature body weight, with stores of fat that will be a savings account of health for the rest of their life. It works like this: the milk contains concentrated amounts of vitamins, minerals, and other compounds for the optimal health of the calf, the calf grows fat to store these compounds (especially the minerals because they are fat-soluble), and they remain ready for use in the fat stores as the calf matures. It is those compounds, stored in the fat, that are used to heal, provide energy, and supply whatever is needed in times of stress,

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The more lactations we get from our cows, the lower the cull rate. At our farm we have a cull rate of four percent. That means that for our 65-cow herd, we only need two heifers each year. We can easily afford to let two of the 65 cows raise their calves each year.



Holstein, Sly, and her two month Ayrshire calf, Rocky

Drought Relief for Grass and Forages -- Is Zinc the Answer?

By Neal Kinsey

While attending our introductory workshop on soil fertility one of the farmers present admitted he never had much faith in soil testing to help determine his fertilizer program. But he and all his neighbors had a persistent problem. Every summer during July and August the grass would quit growing and die back due to too little rainfall. When this happened, the farmers had to feed hay to the cows, and it happened every summer.

His pastures were very deficient in zinc and I explained that this was the limiting factor he had not considered that his soil required to get the most grass growth from the rainfall received. He applied the zinc as a part of the needed fertilizer program. At the end of the next summer after just one year from supplying what the soil test showed to be limiting, including the needed zinc, a letter was included with a repeat set of soil samples. The letter explained that for the first time on the farm it had not been necessary to feed hay to his cows in July and August, but all the neighbor's still had to do so. They said he just got more rain, but the farmer was now observing the benefits of adding sufficient zinc to help his grass better utilize the rainfall. And so long as he kept his zinc levels up, the same thing continued to happen year after year. Zinc is necessary for moisture absorption into plants. If zinc is not present in a sufficient amount in each soil, the plants will not be as likely to thrive or even survive as well on whatever amount of water that happens to be supplied for the crop.

For some farms the addition of zinc to the fertilizer program is exactly what is needed, while on others, it would be a waste of time and money to apply it. Even more often, on some areas of a farm or field, zinc is specifically what is needed, while on other areas, it is shown to be needed, but only most useful once certain other fertilizer nutrients required for the zinc to work correctly are also present in adequate amounts. And herein lies a real problem, too many who try to take care of the soil believe that if one soil responds favorably to zinc, all the others they have and all of the neighbors and maybe more will get that response too. So it might be a good idea to take a look at zinc and try to understand when it is most likely to be helpful if drought conditions materialize.

Let's take another example concerning water to demonstrate how zinc is only a part of the answer needed to resolve the crop's need for maximizing available water to best supply the plants. When you want a glass of water in your home, generally "all you have to do" is turn on the tap. That is because the plumbing work has already been done and a pump was installed after the well was dug to provide the water to the pump. The relationship of zinc to the plant is more like the part where we turn on the tap to fill our glass, all the rest of the necessary "plumbing" needs to be there first.

Unless all of the other parts have been done, turning on the tap does not provide water when expected. Before we can pull in the water, we have to have enough pipe sunk into the ground to reach the source. And for the plants that is like having a deep root system

to gather the water. To do that requires adequate calcium levels, because roots grow through calcium not to it. So there must be enough calcium in the soil or the roots will not go as deep as they should. Though this is not necessarily the correct numbers for soil tests from other testing laboratories, a 60 – 70% saturation of calcium on the soil test we use will indicate when there is sufficient calcium for optimum root growth.

The next goal would be to insure there is a sufficient flow of water that can be pulled from the ground to reach the pump. For the plants this means we need to grow plenty of roots and that is where sulfur and phosphorus are needed. Sulfur helps plants grow more roots, as much as 1/3 more roots when it is there along with the other needed nutrients. For pasture grasses the minimum recommended is 20 ppm and for excellent results S should be 50+ ppm in the soil on the soil test we use. Phosphorus is also needed for maximum root development and generally receives far more emphasis than sulfur. This can be a negative if sulfur is not also considered as to proper need, in that too much phosphorus antagonizes sulfur uptake and too much sulfur antagonizes phosphorus uptake. The adverse effects of sulfur on P is more immediate since it will normally be leached from the soil in a year or less. But the effects of excessive use of phosphorus on S can be both immediate and long-term since it tends to remain very close to where it is placed in the soil.

There is an old saying in many areas where dry weather is a factor in crop production. "Potassium is the poor man's irrigation." Put another way, if you don't tend to have enough water or the money to buy it, be sure the soil has a good potassium content. Like calcium, potassium availability depends not just on how many available pounds per acre is in the soil, but even more important is what percentage of the soil's nutrient holding capacity is comprised of potassium? If the soil has less than 2% potassium, applying enough to reach and remain above 2% in the soil will be most helpful. Potassium is needed to build strong cell walls to keep the plants more erect and provide better water uptake. When the soil is short of potassium it will require more water to grow the same tonnage.

So when considering what is required to maximize water use, be sure that zinc is adequately supplied once the other elements are there in sufficient amounts. Just keep in mind, the lower the humus is in the soil and the lower the zinc level is below 6 ppm, the more the water that becomes available for crop use will be lost.

If your pastures and forage crops are not performing as well as you feel they should, please consider the possible use of our soil analysis and fertility recommendation services to help change that.

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Madre Method*continued from page 6*

e.g. compromised nutritional intake because the feed was cut a little late or it was a wet spring. It is the fat stores that pull the cow through any rough period.

The more fat the calf gains when it is little, the healthier and stronger it will be. Incidentally, there are some critics that warn against this method because they say that it produces "fat in the udder" and thus reduces subsequent milk yield. As the heifer grows, and especially after about four months drinking from her mother, she will develop a very chubby looking udder due to the oxytocin in her bloodstream that she is ingesting via her mother's milk. This is not fat; it is an active hormone system at work. Once the heifer is weaned, the young udder shrinks, and eventually grows to be perfectly "normal", as does the rest of her body "type" and general conformation, despite her paunch-ish beginning.

The heifers raised Madre Method grow to be cows with strength, stamina, disease and infection resistance, and very importantly: fertility. The oldest cow we have that was raised by her mother is 8 years old this May. She has given us 6 heifers and a bull, she maintains a low SCC, has never had a case of mastitis, and never had any health issues. She also looks half her age and shows no

signs of slowing down. The same is true for the health of the ones "raised Madre" that have followed. We are very pleased with the level of performance our cows maintain. Our cows walk up to 2 miles a day, breed back in under 30 days, produce about 9 thousand pounds of milk, and maintain a body score of 3-4, year round, on a ration of pasture and minerals in the summer, and balage, hay and minerals in winter. They also spend all their time outside, year round, except in the coldest winter days and nights.

We have selected for these performance traits in our breeding program, and we are good managers, but even these skills cannot replace a good healthy start. We understand that profit is made by optimizing each aspect of our farm operation, and that healthy, strong cows perform better and are more reliable than the ones that we must coddle. We have compared the vigor of cows raised by their mother to their relatives that were not, and we are convinced time and again that it is a major factor influencing performance.

Genetic Expression

In order to achieve the best performance from our cows, we need them to be healthy and strong, and to perform to their highest potential. The genetic make-up of our cows has much to do with their potential, but not all. The expression of traits relies on two factors: genetics and epigenetics. Genetics is not all "hard wired"




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or simply a result of the genes we get. In other words, how we function depends on genes and environment (things like management, nutrition, stress, weather, etc.). Epigenetics looks at the ways outside factors influence the way genes express, or “what you see”; it covers, human, animal, and even plant life.

Most dairy farmers are breeding their cows to possess the traits they will need to bring profit to the farm.

So even though a heifer may have the genetic potential to produce a lot of high butterfat milk, there may be conditions such as the weather, poor feed, etc. that prevent her from doing so. There are often permanent effects, like the heifer that “never really grew right” because she was set back as a calf. It is a new science, and only partially understood. Some of the research has discovered tiny little meta-genes between the genes. Genetic researchers and some folks who study GMO’s have called everything they don’t understand “genetic trash”, because they don’t have any idea of its function. You can be sure it is not “trash”. The over-simplified view of cattle genetics has compromised our breeding programs.

An animal will only fully express its genetic potential when the previous four generations have received optimum epigenetics such as

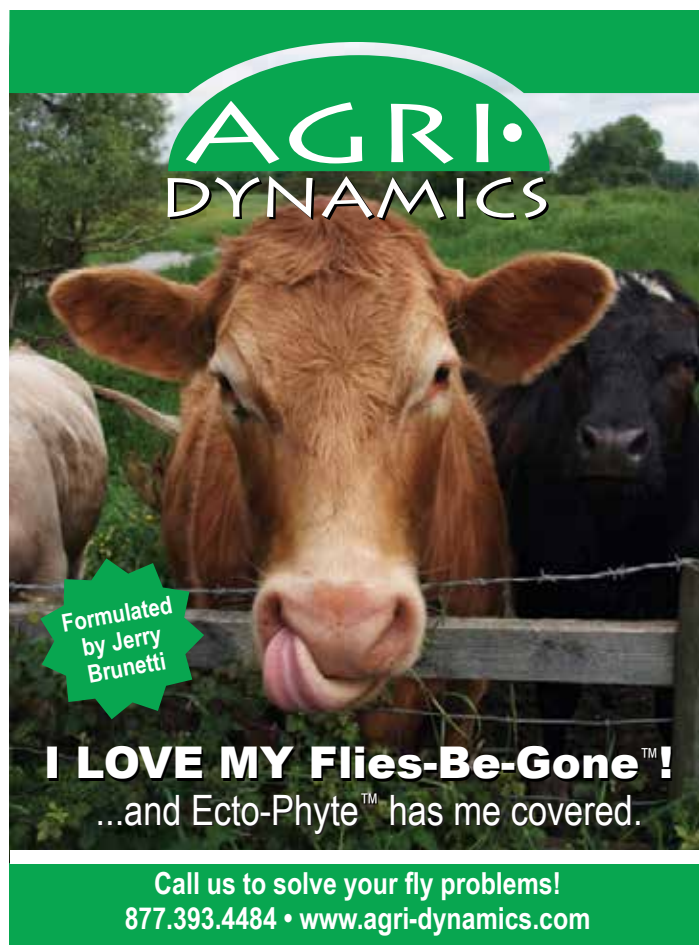
An animal will only fully express its genetic potential when the previous four generations have received optimum epigenetics such as good minerals, feed, water, suitable environment, and have been exposed to manageable stress (allostasis). A high plane of nutrition is key to reaching our breeding goals.

good minerals, feed, water, suitable environment, and have been exposed to manageable stress (allostasis). A high plane of nutrition is key to reaching our breeding goals. Cattlemen invest thousands of dollars in the best breeding stock and semen, and then wean early, don’t feed high quality feed, or skimp on the mineral program. By its very nature, modern agriculture has left us all with depleted resources - namely low soil organic matter, and mineral imbalances in our soils, forages, and crops. Our management practices must be aimed at remediating these deficiencies. This is a whole separate topic in itself, but we must

take this into account as part of the whole.

We must give our cattle the best management through the whole process. If you want the best stock that you are capable of having, you must understand epigenetics and how nutrition plays a major role in the epigenetics of our young stock. A cow makes milk that is specifically designed for the calf she has just given birth to, and the profile of that milk changes for the calf as it grows. Raising the calves on their mother gives us a huge leg up in capturing the full genetic potential of our animals.

continued on page 10



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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Madre Method*continued from page 9*

Once you have a barn full of animals that are performing to their highest potential, the selection process becomes easy. When there are no excuses for poor production we can select based on genes and performance. If we know that what we see is the true expression of the genetic makeup, cultivated with care, then we can cull out the problems. This is when the breeding program really gains speed, and the herd improvement gets going. Now the final benefit of full genetic expression and sound breeding decisions is added to the benefits of the Madre Method and the sky is the limit!

Madre Method Techniques

The techniques for the Madre Method are variable, according to each farm setup, but the basic methods and goals are universal.

First, it is best if you can be present when the calf is born so that you can make sure it can nurse right away. It may need help. Dairy cows are not the same as beef cows, no matter who tells you they are. Often dairy cows are low in energy after calving due to their propensity for making large volumes of milk and the metabolic needs associated with that. The calf is often a little low on energy as a consequence. Give the mother and calf a few minutes to adjust, but be ready to

help the calf stand and nurse within about 20 minutes. There is a side benefit to helping the calf nurse because the cow will smell you along with her calf, and adopt you too, giving you her milk readily when you do milk her. The calf should get some good suckling in, but may need to take a break after only a few minutes.

There is no need to try to get the calf to suckle a full gallon or even quart of colostrum right away if this first round of suckling is very difficult; it will gain strength by nursing small amounts in the first hours. It is absolutely amazing to see the power of a small amount of colostrum nursed directly from the cow versus a much larger quantity administered by bottle.

It is best to isolate the cow/calf pair together away from the rest of the herd between milking for at least one day; three to five days is even better. This will create a good strong bond between the two that will be very important at weaning time. Some cows are natural mothers, and will stick close to their calves, urging them to suckle, and others need some encouragement. They all come around eventually.

The cow and calf can become part of the milking group as early as you decide, depending on the logistics of trying to facilitate the bond. Ours usually begin running with the milk herd after the first 24 hours, and sometimes as early as the first 12 hours after

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birth. At this time the calf runs with its mother day and night and has free access to her milk.

At milking time, we milk the mother cow as we do all the others, taking whatever milk the calf has not drunk. We have a tie stall, so during the grazing season the calf comes in and out with the herd, and usually rests in front of its mother or down at the end of the barn while we milk. If there are a few calves, they seem to like to lie down together somewhere until the cows are turned out again after milking. In other barns, some calves group together in an open stall of the free-stall while the mothers go through the parlor to be milked.

If the calf is born in the winter, and the cows are in the tie stall for the day or over night because of winter weather, we tie the calf next to her mother for a week or so, then in a calf area, bringing her over to suckle before each milking or whenever we get a chance. Whenever the cows are turned out, the calves go too.

During this time the calf is learning the milking routine, listening to the noises, learning to come in and out of the barn, and learning to be tied temporarily. This exposure makes training the heifers to milking much easier later on when they freshen.

As the calf grows there is gradually less milk from the mothers for the tank. Many times the calf will start out on only one teat, then move to two, then three and finally four. I just take what is there. The only exception is that if I notice that a calf has not had

a chance for its meal before milking, I will leave some milk for the calf to suckle after milking. An empty udder will encourage a hungry calf to seek milk from another cow, so I either bring the calf over to drink before I milk the mother, or I leave enough milk in the udder for the calf. It is very important that the calf get priority for the milk.

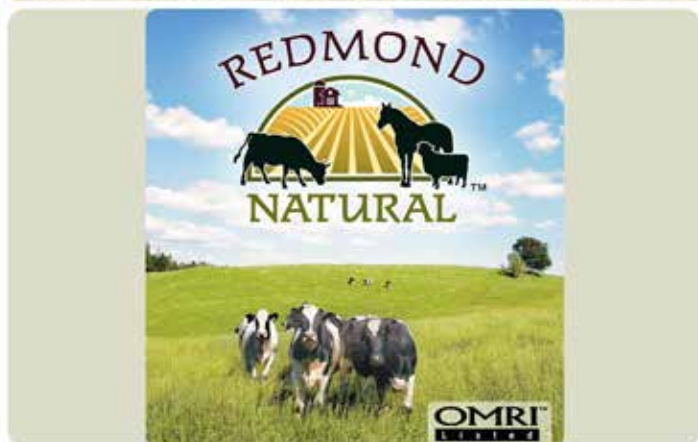
It works best to breed the mother cow back while she is still in the milking group, in the first eight to twelve weeks after calving. This is especially true if there is a bull breeding the cows because he will also breed a young heifer (as young as 5 months) if she is there.

At somewhere between eight and twelve weeks old, depending on the production of the mother cow, the mother/calf pair will be ready to move to pasture full time, or some other place that doesn't require travel in and out of the milking regime. We put the pairs in their own group, or with dry cows and beef cows, out to pasture. The cow/calf pairs can then be managed as you would a nurse cow group or a dry cow group (however, the feed should be appropriate for cows that are lactating).

Any shortcomings in feed, weather, water, etc., will come out of the cows first, before the calves. The calves will suckle and demand the milk they need if the feed is inadequate, or the water is lacking, or it is too hot to graze. Be careful to keep the group well cared for or the cows will suffer. If poor conditions persist,

continued on page 12

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Madre Method*continued from page 11*

the calves will suffer too.

The mother cows will do the rest of the job until weaning time. She will coax her calf to eat, teach her which plants to graze, and countless other things I am sure we are not aware of. Weaning should come at a minimum of 8 ½ months; 10 months is best. The cells of the mammary gland grow four times faster than any other cells of the body in the young heifer between six and ten months of age. We feel that continuing the optimal nutrition from mother's milk should be maintained through this period. At ten months, it should be easy and stress free to simply separate the cows from the young heifers. The initial bonding effort pays off at weaning because for the heifers that only nurse from their mother, once the mother goes away, the young one just stops nursing. With that in mind, it is still a good idea not to put the weaned heifers in with dry cows right away (especially if the calves may have been cross sucking); it may be too tempting to just go to the dry cows for a meal. So if the cow/calf group has the dry

cows in it as well, it is best to remove the heifers rather than the cows.

As for heifers sucking on each other, we have yet to have this happen in our Madre system. We did lose some quarters to calves sucking on each other when we used to bottle feed, but have not had any cases since using the Madre Method. The heifers only suck to obtain milk, and not out of boredom or want of sucking. If there is no milk to drink, they don't seem interested.

Once the heifers are weaned, the cow will be ready for her eight-week dry period before calving again, and the heifer will be ready to breed in three to five months. ♦

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Johne's Disease: Thoughts & Case Histories

By Susan Beal, DVM

I've had some conversations over the last while about Johne's disease. While most folks know about this disease and there is lots of information available that reflects the conventional thoughts and research about it, I'd like to take this opportunity to push the envelope a little, sharing some thoughts about this disease and also recounting some case histories.

The short story about Johne's is this:

Johne's disease causative agent is *Mycobacterium avium*, sub-species paratuberculosis, sometimes known as *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis*, sometimes by the even shorter form: MAP. The bacteria is spread by feces and saliva, and sets up housekeeping in the villa (fingers) of the walls of the small intestine. The body's response to these bacteria is to mount an immune reaction that causes thickening of the walls of the small intestine, with resultant changes in nutrient absorption. Continued immune response causes reduction of weight, poor doing and ultimately diarrhea.

Statistics suggest that ten percent of animals in the auction barns are positive for Johne's, and that nearly seventy percent of the dairy herds in the country are infected, with a quarter of the dairy herds in the country having a "relatively high percentage" of Johne's infected animals in their herds. The estimated dollar value of the loss of production from Johne's infected animals is somewhere in the range of 200-250 million dollars annually. Interestingly, Johne's is rare in beef cattle, with statistics suggesting that 6-8% of the beef herds in the country carried Johne's disease.

See the references at the end of this article for more information.

The longer story about Johne's in ruminants is,.... well,.... longer, and as is so often the situation in biological systems, nothing is clear-cut and simple. The complexity is amazing – and doesn't fit tightly into one box.

The network of veterinarians and researchers who have been working on the control programs for Johne's will say, off the record – as they did at a meeting I attended a few years ago – that all of the prevention methods have really not made any shifts in the incidence of Johne's over the past decade – though they have clearly reduced the amount of other fecal/manure borne diseases such as *E. coli*.

In my conversations over the years – and some of them as recent as this week – about Johne's disease, a faction of my colleagues and fellow cattlemen all come to the same conclusion: the manifestation of Johne's is in direct relationship to the forage/long-stemmed fibre intake and overall mineral balance of the cattle in question. If we feed cattle more like hogs and less like the ruminants that they are, the more likely are they to become "fertile soil" for the establishment of the bacteria that are found in Johne's disease.

That idea of "fertile soil" is an important one. Individuals vary in susceptibility to the establishment of organisms. In fact, some would say that the organism actually manifests in relationship to the environment or terrain. That was the ongoing debate between Pasteur and Beauchamp: is it the bacteria or is it the terrain??

In the situation around Johne's, I (as do some of my colleagues)

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propose that cattle who are raised in situations in which they are low/relatively low in long stemmed fibre and whose mineral/trace mineral balance is compromised are more susceptible to the establishment of certain groups of bacteria. Their overall nutritional status also predicates whether or not the presence of particular organisms will be transient or more permanent.

Some of my colleagues, the late Bill Johnson among them, have managed dairy herds who have been Johnes positive such that these animals no longer had clinical signs of the disease, but also reverted to negative on testing. Sadly, Bill is no longer alive and I cannot press him about his experiences.... and so they are lost to many as irrelevant anecdotes.

I've had the dubious fortune to be involved in several situations in which cattle that have been diagnosed with Johnes have been restored to health via seemingly simple means. One situation that comes to mind involves a herd of grass fed and grass finished beef animals – an unusual presentation since beef animals rarely get this disease, much less experience an outbreak such as this herd saw.

One animal in the group, a senior brood cow, became ill with diarrhea and wasting. Their veterinarian was called and during the examination and testing of the individual cow (and in the absence of other overt cause for the symptoms), Johnes disease was presented as a rule out. Testing was done and the cow was found to be a heavy shedder – and she was culled. Based on that lab result, the rest of the herd was incrementally tested – and 80% or so tested positive on ELISA testing.

The farmers were stunned, to say the least. Working with their

veterinarian, they concluded that the most likely cause of infection was manure contamination and run off in their waterways from a recently relocated dairy farm upstream. A plan was devised in which the animals were provided free choice smorgasbord minerals along with continued rotational forage/pastures. The calves were weaned earlier than is typical with this herd and the groups sorted by test results.

All the animals in the group appeared overtly healthy, in spite of positive testing in a portion of the herd. As the next year's calf crop arrived, the farmers elected, in an overabundance of caution, to raise them on milk replacer, in spite of having had most of the herd revert to test negative over the period of gestation.

Tests on the herd over the next year resulted in all reverting to test negative.

It was a gut-wrenching ride for all, let me assure you, waiting for the outcome of these tests and trusting in the responses of this herd – based on the experience with herds prior who had been treated in the same manner.

I'm not aware of any statistics that differentiate organic dairy herds (who arguably have a higher proportion of long stemmed fibre/forage than do many conventional herds) insofar as their incidence of Johnes is concerned. It would seem to me that these high(er) forage herds would have lower incidence – and that's what my trail has shown me. Yes, anecdotal.

It also seems to me that there is another wild card in the mix here,

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Pay price, feed and retail price update for July 2014

By Ed Maltby NODPA Executive Director

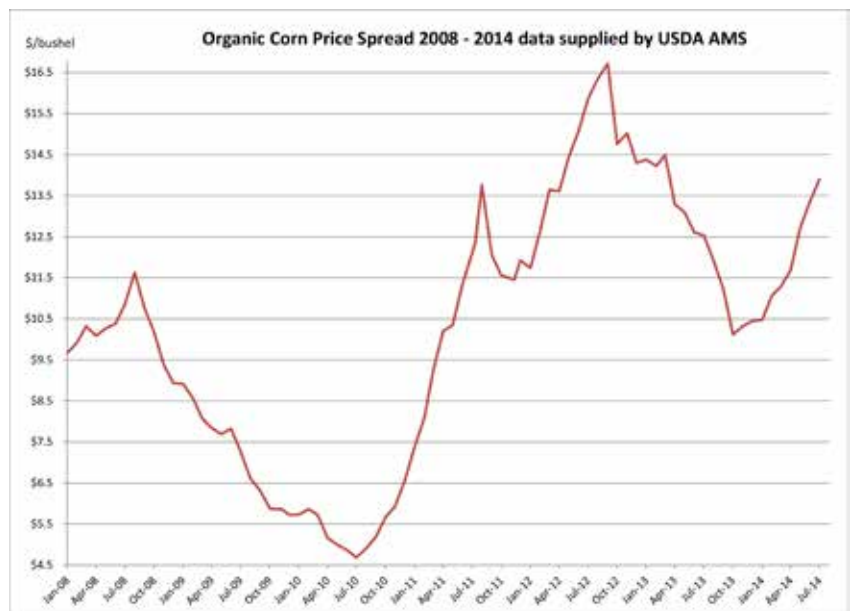
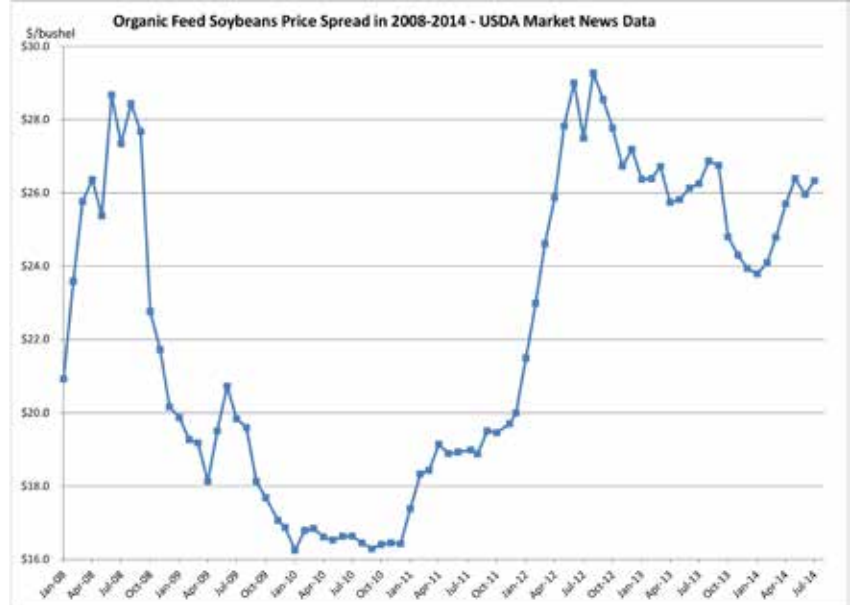
Organic milk supply is tight, consumption of organic fluid milk is increasing, feed costs are starting to rise as supply tightens and purchased organic hay is expensive, if you can find any of good quality.

The current edition of the Integrity magazine from the Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA) has an excellent and detailed article on the profitability of organic dairying in the West. It is viewable at www.wodpa.org. The article reports that retailers who sell organic dairy products have a system in place to ensure they operate at a 2% net profit; major organic processors are also in a positive cash flow with some reporting record sales growth expansion of product lines and increased charitable donations; but organic dairy farm families are struggling to make ends meet. The conclusion of the article is one that all organic dairy producers will agree with and applies to all regions of the country: "There is a serious economic crises occurring throughout the organic dairy community that runs throughout the western region. The most vulnerable are the young farmers and those who have leveraged themselves to stay in business. It is time to build a strategy around sound business practices that will ensure profitability for all producers."

Horizon Organic has at last recognized what other processors and all producers across the country have known for a while, that the increase in input costs is not temporary. With an 8% growth in sales and problems on the supply side, they announced on July 8th that they have increased their base price by a dollar effective from August 1st 2014. Typically this will amount to a 3% increase in pay price with a base price of \$26 per cwt, with a \$3.50 MAP making a pay price of \$29.50 plus any quality/component premiums. In the Northeast the two main buyers of organic milk, Horizon Organic and CROPP, are losing producers to regional processors who are offering higher pay prices and better contracts. Aurora Dairy which is vertically integrated with large organic dairies in Colorado and Texas and a processing plant in Colorado, is reported at increasing their sales of private label half gallons to supermarkets in Wisconsin and Illinois.

USDA AMS reports that the supply of organic powder is causing at least one New England food manufacturer to import from New Zealand and others to import European certified organic dairy powder to be used in

continued on 18





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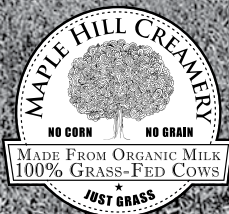
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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

continued from page 17

organic food products manufactured in the US and then exported for sale outside the US. Buyers are being told that organic powder is not available to new accounts and that the situation is unlikely to change until mid-next year at the soonest. This is a situation of supplies not being available, not a failure to agree on price. Pricing currently quoted to U.S. customers for organic NDM ranges from \$3.80 to \$6.00.

USDA AMS reports total organic milk products sales for April 2014, 205 million pounds, were up 7.4% from April last year and up 13.4% year to date compared with last year. The U.S. weighted average advertised price of organic milk half gallons in July 2014 is \$3.82; one year ago the national price was \$3.54. The lowest advertised price, \$2.99, is advertised in the Southwest and the highest advertised price, \$4.48, is found in the Northeast.

Overall crop conditions for organic grains are a mixed bag with some excellent crops but also thousands of acres not planted due to excess rain and even the replanted corn and beans are looking terrible. Organic dairy and livestock consume only a small percentage of organic feed and producers are watching what the effect on supply and price of feed corn and protein will be as large organic poultry producers increase their numbers of layers and broilers.

Reports from USDA AMS and the Organic Farmers Agency for

Northeast Order Utilization for Selected Dairy Products

January–June, 2014 vs. 2013 and 2009

Product	Vol in mill pounds	% change from 2013	% change from 2009
Whole Milk	1,261.1	0.7%	(11.2)%
Fat free Milk	558.5	(9.6)%	(22.5)%
Organic fluid milk	298.5	13.5%	34.1%
Total Class 1	5,077.7	(3.8)%	(10.0)%

Relationship Marketing (OFARM at www.ofarm.coop) show that prices for organic corn and soybeans are starting to rise as corn is in short supply and producers are clearing out their storage silos. It

is also reported that there is a large volume of imported corn set to come into the US on the East coast. Many times organic corn will be imported through Canada though it is grown in other countries for example India. Prices for this imported corn are reported at \$14-15 per bushel delivered in Pennsylvania. OFARM reports that they do have some forward contracts for fall harvest which are over \$12 per bushel.

Winter wheat is still being harvested and yields are lower than expected but the quality is good. It is expected that organic wheat will be in short supply because of the tough winter conditions that resulted in some wheat fields being plowed under which means there will not be much reasonably priced feed wheat. ♦



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Organic Dairy: Getting Down to Business

2014 NODPA Field Days

Stonewall Farm, Keene, NH | September 25 & 26, 2014

continued from page 1

Miles McEvoy, Deputy Administrator of the National Organic Program, USDA-AMS, Dr. Jean Richardson, Chair of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), and Henry Perkins, President of the Maine Organic Milk Producers, past President of NODPA, and long-time certified organic farmer, will share their thoughts on the future of organic certification following the Thursday evening banquet and NODPA's annual meeting. As always, there will be plenty of time for questions and discussion.

As the NODPA Field Days' title suggests, half of this year's program focuses on improving the farm's financial bottom line while the other half focuses on organic dairy's bottom line: the cows.

Dr. Hubert Karreman, VMD and Dr. Cynthia Lankenau, DVM, will team up to provide practical knowledge and tools so you can keep your herd in peak condition.

From the business perspective, we will have workshops that focus on creating sustainability through diversity and planning for the next generation; ways to maximize farm income without large-scale capital investment or changing production practices; and trends and opportunities for grass based dairies in the wholesale organic milk market. Herd health workshops will include the very popular Odairy Live! Ask the Vets: Q & A session, and an extended, hands-on workshop on Alternative Cow Care: Chiropractic, Acupuncture, Acupressure and more which will be led by both Dr.

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NODPA FIELD DAYS 2014

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Karreman and Dr. Lankenau, using cows generously donated by Stonewall Farm. (For full details, see the schedule on page 20.)

Thursday morning kicks off with a tour of Stonewall Farm's diversified enterprises that sustain this 125-year old non-profit farm. As the cost of production has outpaced the pay price for organic milk, they recognized that diversification and niche marketing

were important components of their business model. In addition to organic milk, they produce cheese, yogurt, ice cream, and beef, and have a vegetable operation. They operate a CSA and farm store; maintain a year-round education program - including a beginning farmer education program; are launching a micro-fodder system for sprouted grains; and are involved in the development of a small grains cooperative.

continued on next page

Thursday, September 25, 2014

9 am – Noon Stonewall Farm, 242 Chesterfield Road, Keene, NH (www.stonewallfarm.org)

Tour the farm and the diversified enterprises that sustain this 125-year old non-profit farm where, in addition to their organic milk, they produce cheese, yogurt and beef, and operate a CSA; maintain a full-scale education program; have established a beginning farmer education program; and have a micro-fodder system for sprouted grains.

Noon – 1:30 Registration and lunch, Stonewall Farm

1:30 – 3:00 Organic Family Farms Opportunities: Creating Sustainability through Diversity, and Planning for the Next Generation

Josh Cline, *Stonewall Farm's Executive Director*, will give an overview of the farm's mission and the diverse operations that fulfill it; and will discuss their beginning farmer program which equips new-entry farmers to become economically viable.

Kyle Thygesen, *Stonyfield Farm Farmer Relationship Manager*, will discuss their new program that provides opportunities for organic dairies.

Kathy Ruhf, *Executive Director, Land for Good*, will focus on the next generation of farmers, generational transfer and succession planning for farmers.

3:00 - 3:30 Milk Break

3:30 – 5:00 How to Sell More Than Milk from your Farm: maximizing the farm income without large scale capital investment or changing your production practices

Agriculture in the Northeast is changing and today's farmers need to be poised to take advantage of the emerging trends, such as small scale, low acreage, part-time farms, that have strong infrastructure needs. Participants will hear how producers have diversified their income streams by providing services and organic products to other farmers who are marketing their products and services directly to consumers.

Margaret Christie, *Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture*, Deerfield MA, will present an overview of the growth in retail demand for organic, local, NON GMO products and the increase in limited acreage operations that have the market but lack the volume of product or the ability to produce feed, bedding, mulch products that dairies currently produce for themselves.

Liz Bawden, *NODPA President*, organic dairy producer and producer of heifer hay and bedding hay will describe their operation and route taken to diversify their income stream.

Black River Produce Representative, invited, will focus on the demand for organic meat and the opportunities and challenges for producers and processors. Other invited guests, TBD.

5:00 – 6:00 Trade Show and Social Hour

6:00 – 7:00 Banquet Dinner and NODPA Annual Meeting

Liz Bawden, *NODPA President* and **Ed Maltby**, *NODPA Executive Director*

7:00 – 9:00 The Future of Organic Certification

Miles McEvoy, *Deputy Administrator, National Organic Program, USDA-AMS*, **Dr. Jean Richardson**, *Chair, National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)*, and **Henry Perkins**, *President, Maine Organic Milk Producers*, past president, NODPA, and long-time certified organic farmer, will discuss the future of organic certification, followed by Q & A and audience discussion.

Friday, September 26, 2014

6:30 – 9:00 am Continental Breakfast and Trade Show

7:00 – 9:00 Producer-only Meeting

Henry Perkins, *facilitator, Maine Organic Milk Producers President and past NODPA president*

9:00 – 10:30 "I Knew this Milk when it was Grass": Trends and Opportunities for Grass Based Dairies in the Wholesale Organic Milk Market

Peter Miller, *CROPP Cooperative*, **Joe Miller**, *Trickling Springs Creamery*, **Mike Davis**, *Upstate Niagara*, invited, **Max Winter**, *Dairy Buyer, Brattleboro Food Cooperative*, and a producer, TBD

Learn directly from processors, producers and retailers about new marketing opportunities that will increase pay price while utilizing existing production practices.

10:30 – 11:00 What's Happening in Washington?

Q & A with Ed Maltby, *NODPA Executive Director*, **Miles McEvoy**, *Deputy Administrator, National Organic Program, USDA-AMS*, and **Dr. Jean Richardson**, *Chair, NOSB*

Updates on policy and activities that are impacting Organic Dairy including the proposed USDA Organic Check-off, Margin Insurance and other Farm Bill Implementation measures

11:00 – 12:30 pm Odairy Live! Ask the Vets: Q & A

Dr. Hubert Karreman, *VMD and Rodale Institute Veterinarian* and **Dr. Cindy Lankenau**, *DVM, Certified Veterinary Acupuncturist, Holistic Center for Veterinary Care, Colden, NY*

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

2:00 – 4:00 Alternative Cow Care: Chiropractic, Acupuncture, Acupressure and more

Dr. Hubert Karreman, *VMD and Rodale Institute Veterinarian*, **Dr. Cindy Lankenau**, *DVM, CVA, Holistic Center for Veterinary Care, Colden, NY*

This workshop will provide participants with practical information, effective diagnostic tools and alternative treatment methods to keep cows healthy and to maximize their comfort. Stonewall Farm organic dairy cows will be available for the hands-on experience.

4:00 pm Meeting Ends

Following the farm tour, attendees will have a short walk from the barns to the education center for lunch and Field Days registration, followed by a compelling lineup of afternoon workshops.

The education program gets under way with timely follow up to the morning tour with Stonewall Farm's Executive Director, Josh Cline, giving an overview of their farm, the mission and the opportunities and challenges of running a non-profit farm in "Organic Family Farm Opportunities: Creating Sustainability through Diversity, and Planning for the Next Generation". Joining him will be Stonyfield Farm's new Farmer Relationship Manager Kyle Thygesen, who will discuss the opportunities for organic dairies that their new program offers, and Kathy Ruhf, executive director of Land for Good, who will focus on sustainability through planning for your farm's future. Land for Good works with farmers throughout the Northeast on planning for succession and generational transfer of the farm business.

Next, in "How to Sell More Than Milk from your Farm: maximizing the farm income without large scale capital investment or changing production practices", Margaret Christie, Special Projects Director at Massachusetts based Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA), will share her research findings on infrastructure and aggregating needs related to large volume sales of locally grown products. She will also describe opportunities available to farmers who provide services and products to other farmers that are marketing direct to the consumer. Liz Bawden, organic dairy producer and NODPA President, will provide information on her farm's very successful heifer hay and bedding hay operation, discussing the route her family took to diversify their income stream. Additional presenters (TBD) will focus on organic meat production opportunities, and how farmers can create income streams by providing services to smaller, low acreage, and/or part-time farms.

Following Thursday's education program, we will have our Social Hour where attendees will have time to catch up with friends old and new and visit the Trade Show. Our Banquet will follow, featuring a pig roast and local and organic foods, highlighting the rich New England harvest.

Immediately following dinner, we will have NODPA's Annual Meeting, with NODPA President, Liz Bawden, and Executive Director, Ed Maltby, presenting the year in review and looking forward to the year ahead. Following NODPA's annual meeting, Miles McEvoy, Dr. Jean Richardson, and Henry Perkins will share their thoughts on the Future of Organic Certification, then will take questions and facilitate what will likely be a spirited discussion to close out the evening.

Friday morning begins with an early continental breakfast, followed by a Producer-Only Meeting, facilitated again this year by Henry Perkins, where producers can speak about their concerns, challenges and successes without fear of their views and opinions hindering their relationships with processors. This is a unique opportunity for producers to help direct the future activities of NODPA and clearly express their views on topics that they feel are important.

Friday's workshops begin with Peter Miller, CROPP Cooperative, Joe Miller, Tricking Springs Creamery, Mike Davis, Upstate Niagara, invited, Max Winter, Dairy Buyer, Brattleboro Food Cooperative, and a producer (TBD) discussing new marketing opportunities that will increase pay price by utilizing current production practices in "Trends and Opportunities for Grass Based Dairies in the Wholesale Organic Milk Market".

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REGISTRATION			
NODPA's 14th ANNUAL FIELD DAYS & PRODUCER MEETING & DINNER			
Cost		Qty.	Total
Registration: Thursday & Friday			
Free	Organic dairy & transitioning producers & families		
\$30	All who aren't organic dairy producers		
Meals			
\$10	Thursday lunch for Adults		
\$5	Thursday lunch (under 11)		
\$25	Thurs. dinner for Adults		
\$12.50	Thurs. dinner (under 11)		
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)		
	Donation to NODPA		
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YOU CAN ALSO REGISTER ONLINE AT: www.nodpa.com/fielddays_registration_2014.shtml			

NODPA FIELD DAYS 2014

continued from page 21

Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director will provide updates on activities and policy impacting Organic Dairy, and Miles McEvoy and Dr. Jean Richardson, will be on hand to answer your questions during the session on "What's Happening in Washington?"

Back by popular demand, "Odairy Live! Ask the Vets: Q & A" will feature Drs. Hubert Karreman and Cindy Lankenau taking your questions and leading the discussion in which everyone shares their best information and experiences in cow health and comfort.

After a full morning of workshops, lunch follows, with plenty of time to visit the Trade Show professionals, network with fellow attendees and wait for your name to be called as we have our ever-popular Door Prize Drawings, where there's something for everyone, and you can win great prizes donated by our sponsors, supporter and trade show participants.

We round out the 14th Annual NODPA Field Days with a very special 2-hour, hands-on workshop, "Alternative Cow Care: Chiropractic, Acupuncture, Acupressure and More" featuring the leaders in this field, Dr. Hubert Karreman, VMD and Rodale Institute, Kutztown, PA, and Dr. Cindy Lankenau, DVM, Certified Veterinary Acupuncturist (CVA), Veterinary Chiropractor and Homeopath, Holistic Center for Veterinary Care, Colden, NY.

Drs. Karreman and Lankenau will provide practical information,

effective diagnostic tools and alternative treatment methods to keep cows comfortable and healthy. We are especially fortunate to be at Stonewall Farm, an educational farm where the animals are accustomed to being handled, because their dairy cows will be available for hands-on experience throughout this workshop.

This year, participants are strongly encouraged to make plans early for lodging. NODPA's Field Days is in the heart of 'leaf-peeping' season, so lodging options will fill up fast. Keene, NH is only a few minutes away from Stonewall Farm and Brattleboro, VT is just a few minutes further, and both have a number of hotels, inns, and B&B's. There is camping nearby at Swanzey Lake, www.swanzeylake.com/, and KOA Campsite in Brattleboro has cabins, trailer hook-ups and tent sites available; call 800-562-5905 or visit www.KOA.com for more information. And finally, visiting travel sights such as www.expedia.com or www.kayak.com will help you find good travel options in the Keene area.

Watch your mailbox for your 14th Annual NODPA Field Days brochure, which will be mailed out in early August and will be available for download from NODPA's website. Visit the Field Days page of the NODPA website, www.nodpa.com/fielddays_registration_2014.shtml, for online registration, updates on speakers, sponsors and other program details as we get closer to the event. For more information, contact Nora Owens: email, noraowens@comcast.net; phone, 413-772-0444. ♦

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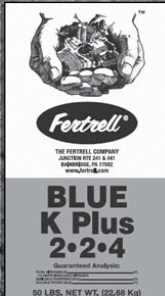
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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Johnes Disease

continued from page 15

too – that being the presence of glyphosate in the feed. There is clear evidence that this agrichemical has antibiotic action (and there is a patent registered for its use as an antibiotic, to boot!). We know that part of the mechanism of action of this chemical involves the strong chelation and binding of certain minerals and nutrients, resulting in the relative overgrowth of the “bad” bacterial and fungal populations and the relative diminution of the beneficial organisms and normal flora of the gastrointestinal tract (and soil!). I can’t help but wonder how the relative increase in the use of GMO crops in ruminant feed rations as well as the increasing levels and distribution of glyphosate has contributed to the incidence of Johne’s disease over time.

It may be that typically beef cattle have relatively less exposure to these rations over their lifetime, being range fed and then feedlot finished – and that may be why we see a lower incidence in that population.

I’ve not yet had the opportunity to work with a Johne’s positive dairy from the perspective of correcting the nutrition and supplement and augmenting that with careful homeopathic

“The manifestation of Johne’s is in direct relationship to the forage/long-stemmed fibre intake and overall mineral balance of the cattle in question. If we feed cattle more like hogs and less like the ruminants that they are, the more likely are they to become “fertile soil” for the establishment of the bacteria that are found in Johne’s disease.”

prescribing – but my gut says that it is possible to have these cattle revert to test negative while improving their overall health, both for the moment and for the generations to follow. Ask me about that in twenty years or so.....

I certainly have more questions than answers here – and would welcome the insight of my colleagues and cattlemen.

Resources:

www.johnesdisease.org

www.johnes.org

www.aphis.usda.gov/publications/animal_health/content/printable_version/faq_johnes_disease08.pdf

Susan Beal, DVM is the Agricultural Science Advisor for the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA). Dr. Beal comes from a long background of holistic veterinary medicine, ranging from a mixed practice to emergency medicine, equine, and companion animal practices. Susan is particularly interested in whole farm/whole system pasture based ecology, and offers common sense advice and counsel with the goal of health from the ground up – thriving individuals and ecosystems. You can reach Susan by email or phone: alchemy@penn.com, or 814 952 6821



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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Cover Crops as Forage Crops...A Look at Winter Rye and Triticale

By Kirsten Workman, Agronomy Outreach Professional

'Double Cropping' or the practice of harvesting two crops from the same field in one year is not a new concept by any means. However, as more and more farmers in the north-east are starting to look at cover crops as part of their crop rotation, it becomes a very viable option to evaluate harvesting them for forage. The most popular cover crop planted here in the northeast after corn silage is Winter Rye. Recently, however, we have started to see more and more farmers plant Winter Triticale (a cross between winter rye and winter wheat) for its purported value as a forage crop. Last spring, several producers harvested winter rye and triticale for forage. We were able to collect forage samples in an attempt to compare them to each other and get a better sense of the overall value of these crops as forage.

We collected samples from three farms on five fields. The farms we collected samples from were located in Williston, North Ferrisburgh, and Wells, Vermont. The farms were harvesting these cover crops as silage, baleage or grazing them. We calculated yields and sent the samples for analysis. Below is a table with our results, averaged by crop. The fields were all no-till drilled in late September at between 100 and 150 lbs/acre (after corn silage or into pasture) and harvested in mid-May. All of the crops were fertilized in the spring (with fertilizer or solid dairy manure). The majority of samples were taken at harvest during the split-boot stage (Feekes stage 10). The yield measurements represent one harvest, and do not account for multiple harvests. The pasture was grazed a second time in early June and that harvest would increase overall yields.

Overall, in our samples, triticale performed better than rye from a forage quality standpoint. Rye, however, outperforms in yields, sometimes by double. One of our triticale samples tested out at 22% protein when harvested at the split boot stage, but our samples averaged out at 17% CP. The rye was not far behind at 16% CP. We also found that planting at higher rates increased yields and quality.

Considerations

In Alburgh, Vermont, UVM Extension Agronomist, Dr. Heather Darby found similar results with her winter rye planting trials. She found similar dry matter yields over the 2011 and 2012 seasons.

They did see lower crude protein levels at closer to 12% (our rye samples averaged 16% crude protein).

Aaron Gabriel, of Cornell Cooperative Extension's Capital Area Agriculture and Horticulture Program also collected samples on four fields this May that were each planted to rye and triticale. Although they did not collect yield data, the protein levels were also lower than ours. Rye averaged 12.7% CP while triticale averaged 14.6% CP. Their relative feed values were very close to what

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AVERAGES-Champlain Valley*		
	Rye	Triticale
%DM	16.25	18.96
Yield (DM Ton/ac)	1.58	0.96
% Crude Protein	16.35	17.00
%ADF	32.90	31.16
%NDF	57.05	55.26
%TDN	67.00	66.40
NEL	0.63	0.63
Relative Feed Value	103	110
% N	2.62	2.72
% P	0.29	0.28
% K	2.53	2.23
% S	0.18	0.22
lbs N/acre	82.15	53.90
lbs P/acre	9.16	5.61
lbs K/acre	80.18	44.68
*all values are on a dry matter basis		

“... aids in prevention... and higher quality milk.”

— Peter Ruegemer



Peter and Anita Ruegemer with daughters Sara (left), Jessica, Rachel (front) and son Nathan. Not pictured are daughter Melissa and sons Jeremy and Jason and Jason's wife Beth and their three boys Luke, Shawn and Caleb.

WINDYHILL DAIRY — THE RUEGEMER FAMILY
VILLARD, MINNESOTA — Milking 136 cows
Production: 60 lbs/cow/day — SCC avg: 250,000
Holstein / Jersey crosses; pasture-based organic

“All of our fresh cows get Udder Comfort™ every day for the first week after they calve, or until their SCC is testing low enough to go into the milk tank,” says Sara Ruegemer. She does herd health, analyzes robotic milking data and checks cows twice a day at her family's dairy farm near Villard in Pope County, Minn.

Windyhill Dairy, owned by Sara's parents Peter and Anita Ruegemer, has been certified organic since 2006. Their 136 cows are milked robotically with special gates for all day pasture access.

The Ruegemers say Udder Comfort's yellow spray is a valuable tool for cow comfort and milk quality, and easy to do on a robotic dairy. Sara sets the robot to identify high conductivity milk and to 'catch' those cows, and the fresh cows, from 2:00 to 8:00 a.m., so they are ready for her to spray udders in the morning.

“Udder Comfort has always worked very well for us,” says Peter. “Our fresh heifers get a better start. They are not as touchy when we are able to get that swelling out of the udders.”

“With the swelling gone, their quarters milk out easier, which in turn aids in mastitis prevention and production of higher quality milk.”

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

Sheen Dairy Farm, Gouverneur, NY Making Quality Milk by 'Keeping It Simple'

continued from page 1

with average Butterfat and Protein of 4.02% and 3.03% and a Somatic Cell Count (last time they checked) of about 79,000.

Producing Quality Milk

So what are some of the things that Jeff and Sharon do on their farm that contribute to producing such a high quality milk?

- They monitor milk quality on a daily basis, using the California Mastitis Test (CMT), and use a quarter-milker if there is a quarter that tests positive on the CMT.
- They offer clean bedding for their cows, using a 50:50 blend of sand and a high mag lime in their freestall barn
- They don't push their cows; they are happy with 35# average production per cow. As a result the cows don't get stressed or sick, and the milk quality remains high.
- Monitor their milking system's cleaning cycle with a focus on hot water
- Ensure that their cooling system is functioning properly, checking it at least twice a year.
- Go through the whole milking system: cleaning the vacuum system regularly, changing all the gaskets and hoses every 6 months, and changing inflations every 3 months.

Getting Started

They started dairying 15 years ago 'more to have fun, than to make a living,' says Jeff. Prior to dairy farming, Jeff had done about everything, including driving a feed truck and working in a feed mill. Sharon had grown up on a dairy farm and loved the lifestyle and the connection to the land. Once their three boys were old enough, she knew that she wanted to make the time to have a farm of her own.

One day, Sharon told Jeff that if he built her a little parlor and barn, that she would milk 30 cows. Well, that is all she needed so say. During the time that he had been delivering feed, Jeff managed to see many types of barns, parlors and livestock housing systems. He took pieces that he liked from many operations and built a freestall barn and a milking parlor (7 to a side with swing units) that met their management style and needs for a small herd.

Before diving into dairying, Jeff and Sharon put pencil to paper and drew up a budget, based upon a pay price of \$11/cwt. At the time (late 1990's), with very little debt, they figured that they could make a modest living - even off of \$11 milk. They would have loved to have borrowed some money to speed up their new dairying career, but getting a loan was not in the cards for them - and turned out to be a blessing in disguise. They approached a bank to finance the construction of their facilities, but were rejected with the promise that once the buildings were in place, they could get a loan to purchase the cows. But after



Sheen Dairy Farm



Free stall barn with 50/50 ratio of sand and lime.

the infrastructure was there (house, barn, milk house), the bank still would not lend them money to buy cows. As a result, they grew slowly on their own with no additional debt.

Starting their farm without a loan forced the Sheens to be frugal; designing a free stall barn and a milking parlor that was affordable, and growing their herd at a pace that they could manage. Their barn and parlor was financed and constructed by the Sheens alone; when something breaks or needs repairs, Jeff is the one to do it. At a certain point, the herd was large enough so that Jeff could quit his job and join Sharon as a full time farmer. "If you want to make a living on 30 cows, you can survive and be happy on 30 cows," says Jeff.

Transition to Organic

The first 5 years of their dairy career was spent shipping milk to the conventional market, and when they made the transition to organic dairy farming in 2004, there was only a small difference in the pay price, though organic was a little higher. What attracted Jeff and Sharon most about organic farming were the principles and practices. The only management practices that they had to give up were dry-treating their cows and the occasional antibiotic treatment. Looking back, Jeff thinks that he gave antibiotics more credit than they were due.

About the Dairy Herd

The dairy herd consists of mostly Holstein cows with a few Jersey crosses. Jeff is the first to admit that he is not much of a Jersey fan, though he knows that the few Jerseys that he does have in the herd are excellent graziers and 'nothing seems to bother them'. The quieter, less emotional nature of the Holstein, however, is more his cup of tea. The herd consists of 25% 1st lactation cows, 25% 2nd lactation cows and the remainder of the herd is in its 3rd to 5th lactation.

Cows are bred using bulls – sometimes picking a bull from their own herd and other times purchasing from off the farm to bring in some outside genetics. They tried using AI a few different times, but found it

takes too much time to isolate the cow and then they worry about the breeder bringing disease onto the farm. It just seems easier to put the bull out with the cow and their job is done.

All the heifers are kept on the farm as replacements, though about 4 years ago, their farm got a little overstocked and they decided to sell 10 springing heifers. Milk prices were good at the time, and they sold those animals for \$2500 a piece. If another surge in heifer calves arises, they know that there is an opportunity for some additional income.

There is no tolerance for illness or unthriftiness in calves. If a heifer is looking 'off', then she leaves the farm. Jeff and Sharon don't want to spend time doting on a sick animal as it uses up their precious time and the longer a sick animal stays around, the greater the risk that other animals will also get sick.

Nutrition and Health

There are not a lot of health issues on Jeff and Sharon's farm and they credit a lot of that to the fact that the cows are housed in clean conditions, are fed a high forage diet, and are not pushed for production. They haven't had to trim their cows' feet for years. The last time they had a vet on their farm for a cow problem was about 10 years ago. They used to have a vet do pregnancy checks for them, but he is too old to perform the task now. To stay on top of calving dates, breeding, and dry off, they use a breeding wheel that Jeff designed. It is color coded to indicate when each cow is pre-fresh, bred, and dry. As the cow gets closer to her due date, they bump the calf to determine when to dry the cow off. This low-cost system works well for them.

Grazing System and Summer Annuals

The current grazing system consists of 6-7 paddocks, that the cows rotate through, moving to the paddock that looks like it has the most/best feed, and clipping pastures that get ahead. Sometimes the surplus feed gets harvested and other times the clipped feed will be left to

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FEATURED FARM

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return to the soil. Jeff is currently working on a new pasture design that will allow for centrally located, 300-gallon water tubs to service 2-3 paddocks each.

During the grazing season, the milk cows get 6 lbs of 16% grain plus pasture. Dry cows and heifers get 100% pasture, calves less than 6 months get a little grain and dry hay, and yearling heifers get pasture and a little grain. All animal groups get free choice access to Redmonds salt. During the winter milk cows get 6 lbs of 16% grain, baleage, and access to dry hay.

The Sheens are in their second year of growing oats, but the jury is out as to whether or not they will continue growing this annual crop. Last year they seeded 35#/acre oats with grass seed and harvested the oats as oatlage. After the forage regrew and recovered, the cows grazed the regrowth. Though the cows produce well on the oatlage, Jeff was not happy with last year's yields. This year, he is going to plant 100# of oats/acre with a pasture mix and he will evaluate this system again to determine if this is a practice that he wants to continue.

New Ventures on the Farm

Recently, Jeff and Sharon started a small beef herd to diversify their farm income streams. They purchased some Angus beef from a neighbor a few years ago, and put the beef bull in with the dairy herd,

keeping the offspring as beef animals. They now have 33 calves/cows and some steers. When they need more dairy stock, they switch out the beef bull and bring in a dairy bull. The steers go through the local sale, which works well, as the conventional price for feeders is excellent. At some point, they might look into retailing their beef animals from the farm.

The Future of their Farm

Jeff and Sharon have 3 kids; their twin boys are 24 and live close by, but do not plan on returning to the farm. Their youngest son, Brian, is 18 and graduates this year, and they don't see him taking over the farm either. This farming team rarely gets a day off; the last time they had time away was when they went to the Farm Aid concert last September. Finding someone willing to work for \$20/hour to milk their cows is next to impossible, and that is discouraging to them. It is uncertain how much longer the Sheens plan on farming, but one thing that they are feeling is a need for some regularly scheduled days off.

But farming brings a routine and an active life that resonates well with Jeff and Sharon. It is rare that they are apart from each other, as they share every aspect of the operation – from milking, to feeding cows, to cropping, to farm records and finances. They started farming to have fun more than to make a living, and by the sounds of it, they are managing to do both. ♦




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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Dual purpose Fleckvieh – a consideration for organic dairies

By Dr. John Popp, Ph.D., CEO, Big Bear Genetics – Bavarian Fleckvieh

Organic production practices demand a cow that is healthy, productive and can live a long time. An added bonus could be revenue generated from beef. Interest has grown in dual purpose breeds for that reason. Every cow has to fit her environment: Can she graze, is she of moderate stature, does she have a flat persistent lactation or a strong front end peak, can she tolerate heat, does she have good feet and legs, good udder health - most importantly can she do well on my farm? Why choose a breed like Fleckvieh?

Staunch supporters for breed development in the dairy sector believe that cows must be angular and dairy for style and type in order to have the ability to produce milk. Roundness and muscularity are not appealing to the eye of one that is in the business of producing milk. Indeed, it is a controversy even among breeders of dual purpose Fleckvieh in Europe. Bavarian Fleckvieh – Bayern Genetik along with their farmer co-operative in upper and lower Bavaria has taken steps over the years to separate themselves in their breeding goals from other organizations in Europe, as they continue to emphasize the importance of strength and dual purpose in their breeding targets. The proof to their philosophy. A strong, muscular dual purpose cow with the ability to produce as much as 32000 lbs. of milk and an income stream from both milk and beef.

In 1999 our organization took it as a life goal to introduce Fleckvieh to the United States and Canada in partnership with Bavarian Fleckvieh Genetics (Bayern Genetik – www.fleckvieh.de). When we started, we were fortunate as three dairies saw what we tried to do. This has grown to hundreds of dairies today throughout North America, many of them being organic. So despite the years' of criticism for our work, it is something that

makes sense to many farmers.

In Germany, Fleckvieh roam steep mountains in the summers foraging, but are also in confinement barns in the areas of rich fertile soils north of Alps. They perform well in both environments. Bavarian Fleckvieh have been bred to have high and tight udders – because of grazing in hills and sometimes trees and shrubs (minimize damage to the udder) and to produce ample milk and beef. Feet and legs are of great importance to the



breeders. Their most important goal is productive life. It is common when you visit any dairy in Bavaria to see cows with 8 to 10 calves. Herds with an average of 3.5 to 4.5 lactations and more.

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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Cover Crops

continued from page 24

we found...both crops averaging well over 100.

Like all crops, yield and quality all depend on management. Planting and harvesting in a timely manner, a good fertility program, and appropriate soils will have the most impact on growing a high quality, high yielding crop. In these situations, either crop would fit the bill. If you are hoping to get a crop off early in order to get your long season corn or soybeans established, winter rye might be a better fit.

Although dry matter yields are the best way to compare results, it is important to note that from a feed management standpoint, rye yielded up to 4 tons per acre of baleage (assuming 55% moisture) and closer to 5 tons/acre of chopped silage (assuming 65% moisture). Triticale yielded between around 2 tons/acre at 55% moisture and almost 3 tons/acre at 65% moisture.

For a cost of \$35 per acre to seed these cover crops, a farmer can see a return of between \$80 and \$200 in feed value (depending on your yields).

Conclusions

Overall, triticale matures later than rye and is shorter with less biomass. It did test out as higher quality feed in our sampling, but was inconclusive statistically. Rye does yield higher. In one pasture where rye was planted right next to triticale in the same pasture, the rye produced 1.49 DM tons per acre while the triticale yielded 0.91 DM tons per acre. In our observations, triticale seed is often more expensive and harder to get a hold of. Although, that may change as more producers purchase it over time. We found that seeding at higher rates closer to 150 pounds/acre gives higher yields and better quality (higher protein, lower NDF) than fields seeded at a lower rate of 100 pounds per acre.



Cover crop height at harvest

An additional one or two dry matter tons per acre of quality feed is not a bad return on the investment of seed. Add to that the erosion prevention you accomplish over the winter and early spring, the nutrient recycling that occurs, and the soil health benefits of increased organic matter, better soil structure, and it seems like it makes



sense in most cases. If you are unable to harvest these crops as forage and must plow them down, they can contribute significant amounts of nutrients and organic matter back to your soil profile, enabling you to reduce fertilizer inputs. Rye provided 45 to 90 pounds of nitrogen, an average of 9 pounds of Phosphorus and 80 pounds of potassium; while triticale provided an between 45 and 65 pounds of nitrogen, 5.5 pounds of phosphorus, and 45 pounds of potassium (per acre).

All in all, a well-managed rye or triticale crop can improve soil health, water quality, and could become an important part of your feeding program.

Other Cover Crops with Potential

In addition to winter rye and triticale, we are starting to look into the success of other cover crops that can provide valuable forage. Forage oats and field peas seem to compete well when no-till drilled into pastures in early spring or late summer, as do winter rye and triticale. In my experience, the larger seeded annual crops seem to do better in no-till situations. We have seen limited success with crops like millet, and brassicas when planted into sod. We have some demonstration plots of some annual clovers (Crimson and Berseem) that were planted this spring with oats and peas and are about to be grazed now. The Berseem Clover is even coming through the sod where it was no-till drilled. After just a month, these plots are going to provide some valuable forage...and some

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Classified Ads

Livestock:

We're looking to buy around 6 certified organic milking cows (prefer Jersey) for our farm in Georgia, VT. SCC under 200 (prefer under 150). Please email ron@bedrockfarmvt.com. We also have for sale/trade some farm equipment including a KM Vicon 281 hay mower.

Contact: Ronnie Sweet, Email: ron@bedrockfarmvt.com, Phone: 802-782-8833. Location: Georgia, VT

Feed and Seed:

For Sale: NOFA-NY Certified Organic 2014 Crops. Dry Hay (Timothy/grass mix) and Bedding Hay. Both 4 1/2 X 4 Round bales. Also Baleage (Clover/grass mix, Alfalfa/grass mix, and Oatlage). Also have 2013 Clover and Timothy Seed still available. Contact Jeff, Mitchell Farm, Avoca, NY - 607-566-8477 or Mitchellorganics@Hotmail.com

Looking for: certified organic large square bale dry hay preferably located in MA, Eastern NY, Eastern PA, VT, NH, Conn. I am needing both dairy quality as well as dry cow quality hay. I can arrange trucking if you don't haul. Please e-mail or phone if you have anything available. Michael Barnes, Email: michael@thegreybarnandfarm.com, Phone: 317-531-3405, Location: Chilmark, MA.

Farm Link:

Dairy farm for lease in Londonderry - 200 acres with approximately 60 acres of pasture & cropland. Tie-stall barn, sheds, garage,

3 bdrm house. Vermont Land Trust seeks dairy farmers who will farm commercially and are interested in a long-term lease. Contact Jon Ramsay at (802) 533-7705 or jramsay@vlt.org

Experienced farm family seeking opportunity to work with retiring farmer and his wife. We would like to work towards possible ownership of the farm and cattle and machinery. Our goal right now is to have an opportunity to get back in farming because we love working with animals and the land. We also have some well used and maintained machinery that we

would bring with us. Our family has grown up on farms and been around the farming industry all our lives. We currently reside in Newark Valley, New York, which is just west of Binghamton. We would like to stay in the Northeast but we are willing to go elsewhere if the appropriate opportunity was too good to resist. You can contact us at: Frank 607-321-5062, Tom 607-321-5694, Minelle 607-321-3684 .



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ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Fleckvieh

continued from page 29

The values to organic production are numerous (documented by research studies and also our field experiences):

1. Productive life
2. Feet and legs
3. Added revenue from beef
4. Superior health
5. Elevated CLA content in milk (second highest affinity for CLA after Guernsey)
6. Genetic depth – 17 sire lines and a 1.8% inbreeding coefficient (lowest of any dairy breed)
7. Good availability of A2A2 sires
8. Prominence of favorable kappa casein gene to increase value of milk for cheese
9. Ability to graze in adverse conditions
10. Elevated efficiency for the conversion of forage to milk
11. Good calving ease sire choices
12. Docile cows

Some unanswered questions that I posed at the beginning on heat stress, stature and lactation. Fleckvieh have the ability to withstand hot and cold temperatures well, as they have a thicker hide and an increased body surface to weight ratio. Sire choices allow for the selection of small, medium or large statured cows. Fleck-

vieh have a flat and persistent lactation which makes their metabolism more stable and also reduces transition problems.

Production data from high and low producing dairies consistently see Fleckvieh crosses performing at 1 to 3% below pure Holstein. With that, however, component rise – a consistent increase in 0.2 units of the protein percentage in milk occurs. Further to that, somatic cell count is lower.

As with anything – not all Fleckvieh are the same. Much of the original breeding programs for Fleckvieh are in upper Bavaria; In the early 1800's Simmentaler from Switzerland were introduced and crossed with local dairy breeds; later forming the foundation for the Fleckvieh breed. The genetics have then spread to Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy and throughout Europe.

I spend a great deal of time educating people on sires and sire lines. When choosing a sire to use it is important to understand how the bull is evaluated and under what conditions he will work. Both Genotype (sire * dam etc.) and Phenotype (physical appearance) are important. Phenotype, unfortunately is often overlooked. He's got a good pedigree so he has to be good..... I am a firm believer in using highly proven sires along with some promising genetics, but I would not bet my future on only young or low proof sires or crossbred sires. We would be happy to provide information on sire choices out there, be it from our organization or our competitors. Nothing guarantees the outcome of progeny, however, highly proven sires are the closest thing to it. Our website and contact information



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is listed at www.bigbeargenetics.com. We can provide a great deal of information about Fleckvieh to you. ♦

John was born in Bavaria, Germany and grew up around Fleckvieh. In 1983 his family moved to Canada and John enrolled in an Agriculture degree program in 1987 and later earned his Ph.D. focusing on management intensive grazing. John travels and leads tours to Germany frequently to study the Fleckvieh breed and see the sires and progeny of the bulls he offers in the North American market. A great deal of time is also spent visiting farms and studying cows in Canada and the United States to determine results of the matings we work with. He enjoys sharing information about the Fleckvieh breed and helping farmers succeed with their goals. For more information about the breed or to contact Dr. Popp, please visit, www.bigbeargenetics.com or email John at: bigbeargenetics@inetlink.ca.

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Cover Crops

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important rest to the cool season pastures. If you are really looking to fill a gap in your grazing during the summer, my suggestion would be to pick a field that is starting to get run down, plow it down and address any fertility or pH issues and seed an annual in a timely manner. Some great options are millet, millet with brassica, a spring grain crop, an annual clover that is quick growing or

a mixture of these crops. If you are intending to graze it, including a small amount of brassica can really boost your quality. This can be a great break before reseeding a poor producing pasture or hay field. This is the most reliable way to get a crop of summer annuals that will provide both yield and quality. ♦

More Reading:

<http://blog.uvm.edu/cvcrops>

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/capitalareaagandhortprogram/files/2013/06/Ag-Report-June-6-2013-1qd72j3.pdf>


<http://www.uvm.edu/extension/cropsoil/wp-content/uploads/2012-Cover-crop-planting-date-and-seeding-rate-report.pdf>

<http://www.uvm.edu/extension/cropsoil/wp-content/uploads/2011-cover-crop-planting-date-final.pdf>

<http://www.uvm.edu/extension/cropsoil/wp-content/uploads/2011-cover-crop-planting-date-x-seeding-rate-final.pdf>

<http://nmsp.cals.cornell.edu/publications/factsheets/factsheet56.pdf>

Kirsten is an Agronomy Outreach Professional for University of Vermont Extension, assisting VT farmers in implementing comprehensive nutrient management plans, cover cropping systems, and accessing cost-share funding to implement Best Management Practices. She can be reached at: email: Kirsten.workman@uvm.edu or phone: 802-388-0511. Visit their website for great articles and other resources: www.uvm.edu/extension/cvcrops.




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NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

*By Liz Bawden, Organic Dairy Farmer,
NODPA President*

Robust discussions about a knuckled under hoof, edema, poor appetite, bladder infection, giardia, and more.

A producer relatively new to farming asked what to do with a newborn calf exhibiting a hoof, knuckled under. Vets responded that a calf can be born with contracted tendons, and that splinting the joint right away is critical. Without a splint, the joint can freeze in place resulting in a permanently lame animal. Place a small board behind the joint to keep it straight, and wrap it in place. Make sure the piece of wood does not dig into the ankle. If the calf does not want to get up on her own, stand her up a few times a day so that she uses the leg some. Homeopathic Calc fluor was also suggested.

A heifer calved with lots of edema, a hard quarter, and a poor appetite. After homeopathic treatment for mastitis, her condition was only somewhat improved. So the farmer cultured the quarter, and the report came back positive for *A. pyogenes*. One farmer experienced with *pyogenes* mastitis said they tried to keep the infected quarter stripped out, but the cow always lost that quarter for the rest of her life. Another farmer added that the animals are infected during the dry period or as heifers, and there is no known cure. It was also added that *A. pyogenes* mastitis may be transmitted by flies, and is known to be more common in humid, summer weather.

A farmer asked for suggestions from the group regarding a cow that had signs of a bladder infection - he noticed straining, an enlarged bladder, and viscous urine. He had been treating her with Catharsis 30C twice a day and garlic tincture. Recommended homeopathics were:

- Pulsatilla if she has mucous from anywhere, drinks less water than usual, and appears more comfortable outside in the open air.
- Nux vomica if she appears to have muscle spasms, is more sensitive to light and noise, and strains a lot to pass urine.
- Staphysagria if she has had a recent breeding or surgical intervention, frequent urging to pass urine but producing only small amounts, often tinged with blood.
- Lycopodium if she appears to be worse late in the day, reddish sediment in urine.
- Sepia is for the cow who has had lots of calves, and her internal tone is poor. Often she is a big, droopy animal with sloppy uterus and organs, or pendulous udder or belly. She is a bit grumpier than usual.

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Website & E-Newsletter Advertising

NODPA is pleased to provide additional advertising opportunities for our organic dairy supporters and resource individuals through our Website and our monthly E-Newsletter.

Website Advertising

Three banner ads are located at the top of the home page and at least 10 other pages on NODPA's website. NODPA.com receives over 2500 visits each month navigating to an average of 3 pages per visit.

Ad Design: Display-ready ads should be 275 pixels wide by 100 pixels tall. Your ad can link to a page on your website.

Cost: Display-ready ads are \$150 per month.

E-Newsletter Advertising

Two banner ads are located at the top of each E-Newsletter, going out monthly to over 2,000 individuals through our E-Newsletter, the NODPA-ODairy discussion forum, and NODPA's Facebook page.

Ad Design: Display-ready ads should be 300 pixels wide by 125 pixels tall. Your ad can link to a page on your website.

Cost: Display-ready ads are \$125 per month.

Discounted rates for commitments of 6 months or more.

Interested in one or both of these opportunities? For more information, contact Lisa McCrory, NODPA News and Web Editor, at:

Email: Lmccrory@hughes.net

Phone: 802-234-5524

Go to the following web page for more information:

www.nodpa.com/web_ads.shtml

Subscribing to ODairy:

ODairy is a FREE, vibrant listserv for organic dairy farmers, educators and industry representatives who actively participate with questions, advice, shared stories, and discussions of issues critical to the organic dairy industry.

To sign up for the ODairy listserv, go to:

www.nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml

Calendar

July 24, 2014

Annual Northwest Crops and Soils Field Day: "Feeding the Soils, the Plants, and the Community"

Borderview Research Farm, Alburgh, VT

The Field Day will give you an opportunity to tour Borderview Research Farm, where over 40 crop and soil experiments are being conducted, as well as getting up-to-date research results. Take a look at the many experiments being conducted at the farm on corn varieties, cover crops, nutrient dense forage management, fertigation, oilseeds, hops (including the new 'Hop Ranch'), reduced tillage strategies and much more! Cost is \$25 per person and there is no charge for farmers (but you still must register). Contact Susan Brouillette at 802-524-6501 or visit www.uvm.edu/extension/agriculture/news-events/?Page=fieldday2014.html#.U8ES5ajWEXw

July 30, 2014

K-Line Pasture Irrigation, Horning Farm, Penn Yan, NY

See Alvin Horning's K-Line irrigation system, learn how he rotates his pastures for simplicity in irrigation. Hear how Alvin is using irrigation to maximize pasture production, mitigate the risk in extreme weather patterns and maintain high quality forage. This field day is sponsored by NOFA-NY through the USDA Risk Management Agency, Outreach and Assistance Program and supported by Organic Valley. Free. For more information, call NOFA-NY at 585-271-1979 x. 509.

July 30-August 1, 2014

Grassfed Rising 2014: Polishing the Soil-Grass-Consumer Connection
Columbia, Missouri

Featuring Dr Fred Provenza, Dr. Don Huber, Greg Judy, and more. For more info, go to: www.grassfedexchange.com.

August 2, 2014

Alternative Forage Crops for Goats and Sheep

Sunny Acres Farm, Athens, NY

Jim and Deborah Taylor have put a lot of energy into extending their forage grazing season with brassica forages such as turnips and radishes and introducing small grains and alternative forages into their pasture management system to help control parasites and reduce grain consumption in their meat goat herd while improving animal and soil health. Come and observe their management practices at work. To preregister call Stephanie at NOFA-NY, (585) 271-1979 ext. 509.

August 8-10, 2014

NOFA Summer Conference, UMass, Amherst, MA

Featuring 200 workshops on farming, gardening, land care, nutrition, & food politics; full and half day pre-conferences; and 100+ exhibitors. This is a family-friendly event with conferences for children and teens, a country fair, and organic meals! Budget conscious accommodations are available, including camping and dorms. Dr Elaine Ingham will present the keynote, "The Organic Biological Revolution". For more info: www.nofasummerconference.org, or email: Nicole@nofamass.org, phone: 508-450-2441

August 12, 2014

Summer Grazing School, Cornucopia Farm, Bethel, VT

Organized in partnership with UVM Extension and NOFA Vermont. Pre-registration encouraged. Contact NOFA Vermont: 802-434-4122 or email

Sam Fuller: sam@nofavt.org.

August 12, 2014

Organic Dairy Day

University of Minnesota WCROC, Morris, MN

Educational programs will feature Hue Karreman, Rodale Institute's organic livestock veterinarian, who will address organic dairy health and supplementation strategies, and outwintering; and Brad Heins, University of Minnesota organic dairy specialist, who will address grazing summer annuals. The Organic Dairy Day includes lunch and is free and open to the public. Contact WCROC at 320-589-1711 or send an email to: hein0106@umn.edu.

August 14, 2014

Practical Soil Management for New Lands and New Farmers

The Farm at Locusts, Staatsburg, NY

Participants will have the opportunity to walk the fields, examine soil tests, work through calculating amendment rates, and see field demonstrations of mineral applications and cover crop management. You will be taught about tillage and field prep; soil mineral balancing and liming; and utilizing intensive cover cropping to build soil organic matter and available nitrogen. Bring a farm soil test to discuss with the group! Call Stephanie at NOFA-NY, 585-271-1979 ext. 509

August 19, 2014

Summer Annuals, Irrigation, and Cow Health

Fournier Farms, Swanton, VT

Organized in partnership with UVM Extension and NOFA Vermont. Pre-registration encouraged. Contact NOFA Vermont: 802-434-4122 or email Sam Fuller: sam@nofavt.org.

August 27, 2014

Fodder Production Workshop, B-A-Blessing Farm, Whitesville, NY

John and Tammy Stoltzfus of B-A Blessing Farm welcome you for an all-day event to learn how to incorporate fodder production on your farm. Hear from John about how fodder is produced and fed as a part of his milking herd ration. Representatives from Farmtek and an Organic Valley specialist will also be available to answer product and nutrition questions.

Registration Instructions: Call Stephanie, NOFA-NY, at 585-271-1979 ext. 509. This event is FREE and lunch will be provided.

August 28, 2014

Soils, Foliar Sprays, & Nutrient Dense Forages

Butterworks Farm, Westfield, VT

Organized in partnership with UVM Extension and NOFA Vermont. Pre-registration encouraged. Contact NOFA Vermont: 802-434-4122 or email Sam Fuller: sam@nofavt.org.

September 9, 2014

Crop Diversification, Hay in a Day, Robotic Milkers, and Grazing

North Hardwick Dairy, Hardwick, VT

Organized in partnership with UVM Extension and NOFA Vermont. Pre-registration encouraged. Contact NOFA Vermont: 802-434-4122 or email Sam Fuller: sam@nofavt.org.

September 13, 2014

Late Season Grazing School

Bread and Butter Farm, Shelburne, VT

Organized in partnership with UVM Extension and NOFA Vermont.

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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." To ensure a fair and sustainable farm gate price.

1. Keep family farms viable for future generations.
2. Promote ethical, ecological and humane farming practices.
3. Networking among producers of all organic commodities.
4. Promote public policy, research and education in support of organic ag.

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Net Updates

Odairy Discussions

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It was recommended that homeopathics be administered in a liquid form dropped slowly on the nose leather. And because a more serious kidney condition can result in a bladder infection that is not responding to treatment, another vet recommended a botanical mix. Into one bottle of dextrose, add 60 to 90cc of a mixture of garlic, goldenseal, ginseng, barberry, and oregon grape root. Give this IV once a day for three days. Alternatively, you could give once as an IV, then 20 to 30 cc orally 2-3 times a day for the following three days.

A 5-month old steer was found laid out on his side after being fed armloads of lawn clippings. The steer bloated, and had to be relieved with a 10 gauge needle. Another producer related his experience with the same circumstance - his calf died within 48 hours. His vet told him that a calf's rumen simply cannot handle gaseous feed at that age. "Calf feed should consist of dry hay, grain, and baleage."

Giardia was causing serious problems for one producer. All the calves became infected. They are using fenbendazole at three times the recommended dose with some success, although some calves relapse, and a few never completely clear up. It was suggested that he treat the calves with Ferro (orally for about 7 days) and address cleaning up the water source.

There was a great deal of discussion about using supplemental energy sources in grass-based (no-grain) herds. Some producers that have used molasses have found that there is a shortage in the supply chain, leaving farmers searching for alternatives. Several producers suggested Zook Molasses Company in Honey Brook, PA as a supplier of organic molasses blended with rice syrup. Other possible sources may be sorghum syrup, palm oil, rice syrup, rice bran or wheat bran oils, even bamboo. Alternatives are needed if the availability of cane molasses continues to be unreliable. "This is a real concern for the no-grain sector". ♦

Advertise With Us!

**NODPA News is Published Bi-Monthly
January, March, May, July, September & November**

Join as a **Business Member** and receive an additional 5% off all advertising. To learn more about Business memberships and the Web Business Directory, go to www.nodpa.com/directory.shtml or contact Lisa McCrory.

2014 Ad rates and sizes listed below.

**Deadline for advertising in the
September, 2014 issue is August 10, 2014.**

Full Page Ad (7.5" W x 10.25" H) = \$575

1/2 Page Ad (7.5" W x 4.5" H) = \$290

1/4 Page Ad (3.5" W x 4.75" H) = \$160

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Commit to a full year of print advertising and receive a volume discount.

Classified Ads: Free to organic dairy farmers and business members. 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).

Support Our Efforts

Become A NODPA Member

See Page 37 For Membership Options

Why Not Advertise With Us?

You'll reach a motivated, qualified audience with information about your products and services ... at an affordable price.

Go to our website to learn more:

www.nodpa.com/nl_print_advertising.shtml

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance Producer Milk Check Assignment Form

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

_____ \$0.02 per hundredweight to support the work of NODPA

_____ \$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 Executive Director, 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, Executive Director, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342, so we can track who has signed up and forward this form to the milk handler. Thank you.

Subscribe to the NODPA News and support NODPA!

By becoming a subscriber you will receive 6 copies of the NODPA News and help support the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance. NODPA depends on your contributions and donations. If you enjoy the bi-monthly NODPA News; subscribe to the Odairy Listserv (http://nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml); visit our web page (www.nodpa.com) or benefit from farmer representation with the NOP and processors that NODPA provides, please show your support by making a generous contribution to our efforts.

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

_____ \$35 to cover an annual subscription to NODPA news

_____ \$300 to \$500 to become a Friend

_____ \$50 to become an Associate member (open to all)

_____ \$500 to \$1,000 to become a Patron

_____ \$100 to become a supporter of NODPA

_____ \$1,000+ to become a Benefactor

_____ \$150 to become a Business Member

Name: _____

Farm Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Date: _____

Are you a certified organic dairy producer? YES NO

Number of milking cows _____

Milk buyer _____

Are you transitioning to organic? YES NO If yes, anticipated date of certification: _____

Please mail this form with a check to: Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342, or by fax: 866-554-9483 or by email to ednodpa@comcast.net. Please make your check payable to: NODPA

Credit card: Master Card Visa Card #: _____

Name on Card: _____ Expiration Date: ____ 201__ Security Code on Card: _____

Organic Milk Sought

CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley

CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley is the nation's largest farmer-owned organic cooperative. With members throughout New England, the Northeast and Southeast, we offer a stable, competitive organic milk pay price to members. We are forecasting solid growth in these regions and welcome the opportunity to talk with producers about joining our Cooperative.

We offer veterinary support, quality services, organic food, the Organic Trader buy/sell newsletter and inclusive communications from a farmer-owned cooperative with over 25 years of organic farming and marketing experience. Our Feed Department sources organic feed purchases for our member operations. Please contact our Regional Managers or Farmer Relations for further details.

- In New England, contact John Cleary at (612) 803-9087 or john.cleary@organicvalley.coop or Steve Getz at (608) 632-3790 or steve.getz@organicvalley.coop.
- In New York, contact David Hardy at (608) 479-1200 or david.hardy@organicvalley.coop.
- In Central and Western Pennsylvania area, contact Peter Miller, at 612-801-3506 or peter.miller@organicvalley.coop.
- In the Southeast, contact Gerry Cohn at (919) 605-5619 or gerry.cohn@organicvalley.coop.

Farmer Relations is available from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern Monday through Friday at (888) 809-9297 or farmerhotline@organicvalley.coop and online at www.farmers.coop.

Natural by Nature

Looking for an organic milk market? Natural Dairy Products Corporation (NDP) was founded in 1995 as a family owned and operated organization producing organic dairy products under the Natural By Nature brand name. Natural By Nature organic dairy products are produced with great care and distributed nationwide.

We are actively seeking organic, grass-based dairy producers in the southeastern PA, northern MD and DE areas. NDP pays all hauling and lab costs, and we are

currently offering a signing bonus, so this is the time to call! We'd be happy to answer your questions ... please call 302-455-1261 x221 for more information.

Upstate Niagara

Upstate Niagara is a member owned dairy cooperative dedicated to high quality dairy products. We are currently seeking new organic member milk. Upstate Niagara offers a highly competitive organic pay program with additional premiums for milk quality and volume. For producers interested in transitioning to organic production, we also have programs to assist you in the transition process.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact Mike Davis at 1-800-724-MILK, ext 6441. www.upstateniagara.com

Maple Hill Creamery

Seeking 100% Grass Dairy Farmers! Maple Hill Creamery, located in Stuyvesant, NY is a small manufacturer of 100% grass-fed organic yogurt. We are growing rapidly and are looking for more 100% grass-fed farms in the NY state area to join us.

We offer:

- Six month winter premium
- Grass fed premium paid OVER organic milk price
- Grass fed dairy technical assistance / mineral program
- Organic transition payments possible

Requirements:

- No grain, no corn silage
- Just pasture, dry hay and baleage
- Certified Organic
- Please CALL US with questions! Phone: 518-759-7777

Dairy Marketing Services Organic:

More milk is needed by Northeast organic customers! Dairy Marketing Services can help you facilitate the transition from conventional to organic production. Count on DMS Organic specialists for organics, transition stabilizers, pasture requirements, pasture supplies and more. Call David Eyster at DMS: 1-888-589-6455, ext. 5409 for more information today.

To be listed, free, in future *Organic Milk Sought* columns, contact Lisa McCrory at 802-234-5524, lmccrory@hughes.net.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the MODPA Treasurer

As I write this we are just a few days short of the birthday of our country. I wonder if the fathers of our country ever in their wildest dreams could have imagined the country we live in today. As far as I can tell from my history studies they were all very appreciative of the land they worked and those who worked the land. I doubt they ever thought the level of control placed on farmers today could exist. They were truly organic farmers. Their methods would pale by today's standards but they were able to make a living from the land. Most did not have to have off farm employment to keep the farm. When I first got involved in the organic community the future looked very bright for those producing for the organic market. The pay price was a lot closer to true cost of production and at the time it was being looked as a niche market not a commodity market. Today that concept is one of the past. The processors don't seem to care if you are able to cover your cost of production or not. It is about their ability to generate profit for the members or shareholders. Now they seem to think we need to pay for their advertising and research costs too. I think that if they can't find a way to fit this in their budgets they are probably not the business minds they would like us to think they are. We are expected by them to operate on a razor thin margin or less

but when we expect that of them we don't know what we are talking about. The cost of production continues to rise but the pay price does not seem to follow our costs. The pay price has seen no real increase for quite some time but I don't need to tell any of you that. The conventional price in my area is very close to the organic price making the desire to be organic even less. I realize that many are doing it because it is the right thing to do. I applaud you for that but it does not give our processors the right to not treat the producer fairly. We have to hold them to a higher standard. It is our duty.

There continues to be a big push for an organic checkoff. It has not worked in the conventional market. The number of farms continues to shrink. Consumption of conventional dairy in the fluid form also continues to decline. If the checkoff was working as they promised when it went into effect there would be more farms and more consumption. I have seen nothing in the promotional work of the OTA to convince me otherwise. They seem to carefully pick their numbers and those that who will make the push for them. The number of real farmers that they will involve in this is controlled by those making a push for the checkoff. However most of these people will never pay a cent into the program. This is a bad deal for farmers and they know it. They don't have to care though so they say it is just business. If we treated them that way they would kick us to the curb. We all need to speak out and make certain that they know we don't approve of these actions and that we are not going to take this sitting down. Please let your feelings be known, If they know there is enough outcry against this I think there may be a chance to stop this. If we don't speak out we have nobody to blame but ourselves and should be prepared to suffer the consequences.

In my area of the Upper Midwest weather is also playing into the equation. We have not been able to plant some of the crops in in this area and now it is getting too late to find good alternatives. This is just one more stress test for most. I think odds are good that milk production for the next year has already been affected in a negative way. True proof of the old saying, "When it rains it pours."

Please get out and let people know what you think of the present situation. It is the one obligation we all share. Also please have a safe balance of the summer. Make certain to take a break when you need it, life is too short to not appreciate it.

***Blessings and Safety to all,
Bruce Drinkman
MODPA Treasurer***

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

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Northampton, MA**

CALENDAR

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Pre-registration encouraged. Contact NOFA Vermont: 802-434-4122 or email Sam Fuller: sam@nofavt.org.

September 19, 2014

Sustainability for Massachusetts dairies: Grazing, raw milk, and organic certification, Sidehill Farm, Hawley, MA

This on-farm workshop will include a pasture walk, tour of the farm's dairy and yogurt-processing plant, and conversations with a range of experts in the field, including: Host farmers Amy Klippenstein and Paul Lacinski, Grazier Ridge Shinn (www.ridgeshinn.com), NRCS Agronomist Tom Akin, Winton Pitcoff of the NOFA Mass Raw Milk Network, and Don Persons of Baystate Organics, who will be on hand to discuss the process of organic transition and certification. For more info: Winton Pitcoff, winton@nofamass.org or : www.nofamass.org/programs/raw-milk-network#.U8BBdajWEXw

September 19-21, 2014

**Common Ground Country Fair
MOFGA Headquarters, Unity, Maine**

The Common Ground Country Fair is delighted to be one of the most popular destinations in Maine each fall. Annually almost 60,000 visitors enjoy the Common Ground Country Fair.

For more information, www.mofga.org/theFair or call: 207-568-4142

September 25-26, 2014

**14th Annual NODPA Field Days
Organic Dairy: Getting Down to Business
Stonewall Farm, Keene, NH**

See pages 19-22 for details on the NODPA Field Days. For more information on sponsorship or trade show space, please contact NODPA event coordinator Nora Owens:

noraowens@comcast.net, phone: 413-772-0444, or visit our website: www.nodpa.com/fielddays_2014_overview.shtml
