

NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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WWW.NODPA.COM

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Cows at Cliff and Maggie Hawbaker's farm in South Central PA.

Hamilton Heights Dairy Farm & Emerald Valley Dairy Farm: South Central Pennsylvania

By Lisa McCrory, NODPA News Editor

“**W**ealth and production are two different things – our focus is on wealth; we milk acres, not cows”, says Cliff Hawbaker. He and his wife Maggie own and operate two organic, no-grain, dairy farms in South Central Pennsylvania. Their mission, “To explore and manage dairy related resources with a focus

on wealth accumulation and quality of life for employees and family”, guides them through all their decision-making.

The home dairy, Hamilton Heights Dairy Farm in Franklin County, has been in Cliff's family for 6 generations. The Emerald Valley Farm in Cumberland County was purchased in 2005 and is currently being managed by

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NODPA Kicks Off November Fund Drive

Have you received your NODPA Fundraising letter yet? If not, it should be in your mailbox any day. When it arrives, we hope you will consider all the ways NODPA works for Organic Dairy farm families and those who support the industry, and send in your check, cash or credit card payment as soon as possible. And, if you already support NODPA through a monthly Milk Check Assignment or during NODPA's Field Days, we say thanks!

NODPA provides a wide range of resources

and services, such as hosting and moderating the ODairy list serve, publishing the print newsletter (NODPA News) 6-times per year, monthly e-newsletter, website, annual Field Days, and advocacy on behalf of all organic dairy farm families through membership in the National Organic Coalition. We keep costs to a minimum but there are still bills to pay. We know you depend on NODPA for the latest organic dairy news and education and that your support is a vote for the work we do.

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

From the NODPA President

It seems that we are seeing some big changes in the organic milk marketplace in the Northeast these days. The consumer-driven demand for milk that is higher in beneficial fatty acids is driving the creation of a "grass-fed" niche. If you have thrown away the grain scoop on your farm, it seems that you have some new options for marketing your milk, and these processors are willing to pay a reasonable premium for it. While a "no-grain" management model definitely will not fit every farm, it is good to feel that we have some new options.

Like most farmers, our family can pause to take a breath this month to sit around the table and feel thankful for the blessings of the harvest. Memories of the difficulties of a late spring and rainy summer fade, as we prepare for the winter that is just around the corner. And our attention quickly turns to the next growing season. It won't be long before those brightly colored, glossy seed catalogues start to arrive in the mail!

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From all of us at NODPA, we wish your family a warm and joyous Holiday season!

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

Parting Words from NODPA's News & Website Editor

It seems like almost yesterday - I remember sitting in a room with over 30 producers and resource individuals - many who proved to be very influential in the coming years. It was February 16, 2001 and organic dairy farmers from around the Northeast gathered in Waterbury, VT to talk about issues pertaining to the growing organic dairy industry. It was the Summit Meeting from which NODPA was formed. Of course, the major driving force behind this desire to meet was - you guessed it - milk price.

As the Coordinator for NOFA Vermont's Dairy Technical Assistance Program, I helped organize the summit meeting and was elected (or perhaps I volunteered) to be the Coordinator for this new organization. In 2004 I gave up my NODPA Coordinator role so that I could have more time to start a family and a farm. I maintained my position as the Newsletter and Website Editor as a part time position; I am so glad that I did.

Over the years since that unforgettable February day, I have:

- Met and become close friends with many of you,
- Helped create the print NODPA News and NODPA's website - rich with a library of archived articles, Industry News, Feed and Pay Price, the Odairy List-serv, and other resources,
- Seen children of some of the first certified organic dairy farms take over the farm or become partners with their parents,
- Been an active participant, working for and with an organization that stands up for the needs of organic dairy producers far and wide.

I have learned so much over the years about what it means to be a thoughtful, purposeful and caring farm steward. I have learned the importance of clear communication and being respectful of other peoples' sides to complicated issues. I have learned to stand up for things that are important to me, and have experienced the power of the democratic process.

This letter (yes, I am finally getting to it) is to let you know that I will be leaving my position as NODPA's

Newsletter and Website Editor. Though I will no longer be a paid staff person for NODPA, I plan to stay involved with NODPA as a producer member. After all, we do have two organic dairy cows!

Our diversified organic farm is getting larger in scope, our children are growing up, and I am looking forward to the opportunity of spending more time with my kids while we dive into exciting adventures on our farm, tending to our livestock, managing our pastures and gardens, and - essentially - 'living the dream'.

I will miss my work as NODPA's Newsletter and Website Editor, but know that it is being left in excellent hands. Thank you for the wonderful ride, and I look forward to seeing many of you at future NODPA Field Days events.

Sincerely,

Lisa McCrory



ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

The 14th Annual NODPA Field Days and Annual Meeting Hailed as a Great Success

By NODPA Executive Director Ed Maltby



Veterinarians Dr. Hubert Karreman, VMD and Rodale Institute Veterinarian, and Dr. Cynthia Lankenau, DVM, CVA, Holistic Center for Veterinary Care

Organic producers and their families sent a clear message about their top concerns while at the 14th Annual NODPA Field Days, and they are:

1. The shortage in supply of organic milk is a great opportunity to push the pay price up to help offset high cost of inputs.
2. The Organic Trade Association does not represent producers.
3. NODPA producers voted to oppose a federally mandated check-off – unanimously.

The NODPA Field Days were held during the last week of September at Stonewall Farm, Keene, NH, in the bucolic setting which has a remarkable building, a unique and very relevant mission, and wonderful staff. All of these aspects made for a great event that some said was the best NODPA Field Days ever. The Commissioner of Agriculture for New Hampshire, Lorraine S. Merrill, dropped in on Thursday afternoon to welcome the group to New Hampshire and to Stonewall Farm. Following NODPA's Banquet and Annual Meeting, the keynote speakers were Miles McEvoy, National Organic Program Deputy Administrator, and Jean Richardson, the new Chair of the National Organic Stan-

dards Board, who joined past NODPA President Henry Perkins in a diverse and rich presentation of how unique the National Organic Program is, and the important role that producers play in its future. Miles McEvoy's presentation can be found on the NODPA website at www.nodpa.com.

Field Days started with a tour of Stonewall Farm, rich in diversity, which was very informative and mirrored some of the many ways that organic dairy farms can thrive in the future, including a new mini-combine that immediately had the male producers swarming all over it when it was started up. Executive Director Josh Cline conducted the tour of diverse operations at the farm which included their 50-70 member-share CSA vegetable operation, which also sells bagged compost; a 1-year Farm School farmer training program that has an option to include a MBA in Finances from Antioch University, at a cost of \$5,500 per year, including housing; selling bottled milk, yogurt, ice cream, and cheese; Cool-Bot technology and an insulated shed (home built), to create a walk-in cooler for under \$10,000; access to a small combine, which was introduced (and demonstrated) by Dorn Cox who had purchased it for \$19,000. Dorn Cox also works with two non-profits to support his work assisting with

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The Good Stuff For Fly Control



"Our Cow•Vac wasn't installed until late in the fly season, but when it got going, it was very effective at catching horn flies. There was a learning curve for the milking herd to easily go through the Cow•Vac, but once it clicked with them, they went through like clockwork."

—Kathie & Kirk Arnold,
Twin Oaks Dairy - Truxton, NY

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—Theresa and Delmar Westaby C-R View Dairy
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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Field Days Summary

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harvesting, storage and seed cleaning for small grains and smaller scale livestock operations (Green Start and Farmhack.net). Tour participants also observed their small-scale organically certified micro-fodder system, and ended with farm manager Glenn Yardley talking about the dairy cows in the large tie stall barn and milking operation. The farm was featured in the March NODPA News.

The workshop sessions 'Maximizing farm income', 'Planning for the next generation', and 'Creating a sustainable farming future' were presented by national leaders of programs that have proven track records, and provided relevant and detailed information. One of the great aspects of Field Days is being able to talk with these leaders and innovators in person, and to go beyond the presentation and learn from their practical experiences. Kathy Ruhf was able to share her knowledge on generational transfer which she sums up as, "Farm entry and exit are flip sides of the same coin. We need to pay attention to both, and solutions for one side of the coin can offer solutions to the other." Margaret Christie was able to share her knowledge of over 20 years of experience with Buy Local programs which can increase farmers' income as they diversify their operations, and Kyle Thygesen informed participants about Stonyfield Farm's future plans for sourcing milk for their yogurt program. Liz Bawden spoke about her family farm that developed a successful bedding and heifer hay operation, in addition to producing organic milk, and Sarah Flack gave some do's and don'ts from her business planning work on diversified livestock farms. There was an excellent panel discussion of grass-fed dairy. Peter Miller, a representative from Organic Valley, discussed the launch of "Grassmilk" in response to consumer demand. Joe Miller from Trickling Springs Creamery and Tim Joseph, Maple Hill Creamery also shared their observations. Sarah Flack, a grazing

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Panel discussion of grass-fed dairy.



Mini-combine with Henry Perkins, Dave Johnson and Steve Morrison



Meal time at Field Days.

“We met our goal to improve for the Gold...”

— Jeff Koester



KOESTER FAMILY FARM

SCALES MOUND, ILLINOIS — 40 cows

Crossbred grazing dairy 55 lbs milk/cow/day

2012 Organic Valley Gold for SCC of 90,000

Jeff and Sheila Koester with sons Nathan, 16, Colton, 14 and daughter Madalyn, 5, at World Dairy Expo booth.

“We bought our first five-gallon jug of yellow Udder Comfort™ spray in 2010 and started using it on fresh cows right away. If we had some cows that showed swelling before freshening, we’d get them in to spray those udders a few times prefresh.

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“Our SCC averaged 120,000 in 2011. It was higher before. As we went from on-and-off to more routine use, Udder Comfort became a key to progressively bring down counts.

“By 2012, we were spraying udders after each of the first 8 post-fresh milkings. Our cows don’t swell much, but we did this, routinely, no matter how much swelling we saw.

“We met our goal to improve for the Gold Quality Award as our SCC average for 2012 fell to 90,000, and we had fewer flare-ups last year.

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Danes Tour Northeast Organic Farms

By Susan Beal, DVM, Laughing Oak Farm

What do you get when you put two Pennsylvanians and five Danish farmers and organic advisors - and all their gear - in a Chevy van and head out to get the scoop on the state of grass based dairy, Holistic Management and planned grazing in the Northeast?

Well..... lots of miles (1190 between Sunday evening and Friday night), lots of farms (a dozen), lots of amazing and generous farmers, lots of livestock (cattle of all classes and colors, poultry, sheep and hogs), some glorious scenery and examples of the vast variety of land and farming practices in the region, not much sleep - and amazing experiences, buckets of laughter, and the foundation of friendships and collaborations that are sure to span the years.

We jumped into the week at the deep end when Maggie Robertson, a vegetable farmer friend from Clarion County who provides a van service as part of their farm business, and I headed from west central Pennsylvania to Newark Airport to meet the Crew of Danes. We had names and the flight number - and a sign to welcome them - and after waiting for hours for folks to clear customs and hunt some stray luggage that was in another time zone, we were off.

The group consisted of five Danes. Thorkild Nissen and Carsten Markussen work for Okologi, an organic advisory and educational organization. Thorkild is the livestock specialist and Carsten works mostly with the crop and agronomy end of things. In addition to his "day job", Thorkild has a small group of cattle he is rotationally grazing.

Marie Sogard is an experienced dairy farmer who is transitioning her hundred and sixty cow Jersey herd to holistic planned grazing with the goal of producing purely grass/forage fed milk.

Leif and Sarah Rorbye, father and daughter, rounded out the group. Leif is a long time dairyman who is studying Holistic Management and is grazing five hundred dairy steers on land that is part of a large CSA and Sarah, who recently graduated from agricultural school, is working on her boyfriend's father's large confinement hog farm. Sarah stepped in at the last minute, zooming through visas and paperwork, when one of the farmers who had planned to come was significantly injured by a runaway round bale.

After the insanity of Newark, we headed to Maggie's parent's rambling stone farmhouse near Oley, PA. Stuart and Ann Kerns opened their home, hearts and pantry to us for several days through the week, and that first evening there was a good transition from the long day of travel. It was just a short ride the next morning to the site of our first visit: Bendy Brook Farm. Nevin Mast met us in the yard and we trundled around, looking at cattle, poultry and hogs, as Nevin told about his experiences transitioning to a rotational grazing system. After a morning there, we were off - headed for Lancaster County and Roman and Dwight Stoltzfoos' and their fam-



Rob Moore talking to the Danish visitors



Dairy cows at Spring Creek Farm



Sheep at Brothers Ridge Farm

ily's Springwood Dairy. Roman and Dwight, both busy with moving stock and building projects, tag teamed with us that afternoon as we saw the diversity on their farm. The integration of poultry and cattle was of great interest to the Danish group and there was much discussion on how to manage for optimal performance for both species, given the very different pasture requirements and influence on the land.

Pushing the envelope of time and distance, we piled into

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Foundational Principles of the Albrecht System

By Neal Kinsey

Though some modern-day soil scientists claim otherwise, from all Dr. William A. Albrecht said – whether during personal visits to his office in Mumford Hall at University of Missouri / Columbia, or through personal guidance while completing his private study course on soil fertility – or what he wrote – by reading his published works in journals, university publications and books, and finally utilizing that information as a soil fertility specialist from 1973 to the present – the more it becomes clear, he really was a true scientist. What's more he was a scientist with the welfare of people, livestock, crops and soils in his heart and mind. Understanding and teaching the true principles of science always mattered more to Dr. Albrecht than that of public opinion, wealth or fame. He really believed he could help mankind most by learning and explaining the principles of soil fertility (to improve the growth of feed for animals and food for people) thereby improving the health of the soil which would translate to better health for all that lived from it.

And once he found a principle that science showed was accurately repeatable, Dr. Albrecht was fearless in pursuing such, even if some of his peers were not so inclined. One such principle was that of measuring the need for calcium and magnesium versus using pH to determine when to apply lime or gypsum to a soil. Most soil scientists around the world today still maintain that Dr. Albrecht was wrong about this and pH should still be the method used to determine whether to apply limestone or not.

From the 1970's until now, many in agriculture go to great lengths to publish articles and information in order to refute what Dr. Albrecht has worked to build in this regard. Generally those presentations begin by addressing the use of "calcium to magnesium" ratios to dispel his work on the subject. There are those who advocate the use of a "calcium to magnesium" ratio, and some may ascribe this as something Dr. Albrecht advocated.

From my first exposure to Dr. Albrecht and his answers to why we had problems on our farms, I can recall that he stressed – measure the four nutrients in each soil that can affect pH (calcium, magnesium, potassium, and sodium) – but it was never a ratio that he stressed. The stress was on the percent of saturation, and the pounds of each element required for obtaining that proper percentage. Perhaps it could have been read over, but I can never recall reading or hearing that Dr. Albrecht stressed a ratio of calcium to magnesium even once.

My acquaintance and association with Dr. Albrecht came rather late in his career (1967 – 1974), and perhaps he did refer to such a ratio in earlier years, I just never was exposed to it. As he learned, he refined the knowledge. Still, I have known many who were personally taught by Dr. Albrecht, and to this point, none I have thought to ask could recall him teaching a "calcium to magnesium" ratio. If by chance there is contact with those who say he did, the first question should be whether they actually were taught that by Dr. Albrecht or if they perhaps made that assumption based on what others have written or said, and whether they have assurance that that source is truly quoting Dr. Albrecht himself. Personally, I doubt very much that such would ever be the case!

With all that said, let's get back to the part of the controversy intended to be addressed in a new way in this presentation. That controversy has to do with the effects of calcium and magnesium on the soil and how that affects fertility, plant growth, and yield.

These are foundational principles in terms of understanding and applying the Albrecht system of correcting soil fertility and thus positively affecting the plants to be grown on that particular soil. The overall concept harkens back to the definition in agronomy textbooks concerning what is an ideal soil. The ideal soil is described as 25% air, 25% water, 45% mineral and 5% organic matter. But what if you don't have that ideal soil? What has to be done to achieve it? Unless the approach Dr. Albrecht devised is used I know of none who will propose it can even be done. And the simple answer he would give is to use soil chemistry, to build as closely as possible the correct physical structure (25% air, 25% water, 45% mineral and 5% humus) which in turn supplies the proper environment for the biology (roots, worms, microbes, etc.)

Achieving the correct percentages of calcium and magnesium in particular provides the basic requirements for this equation. For medium to heavy soils the numbers are 68% calcium and 12% magnesium, or as close as is feasible to achieve that (for example 66 – 70% calcium and 10-12% magnesium should provide extremely satisfactory results). In such soils emphasis is placed on pushing the percentage of calcium toward the 70% mark and supplying enough magnesium to keep it above 10%, but below 12% for best overall results. As the correct amount of calcium is measured, soils that are most lacking, as reflected by lower and lower calcium percentages as analyzed in the lab, will be harder to work. As the calcium is correctly added to achieve the required percent, the soil actually becomes more friable. Such soils are easier to work, have better water penetration and possess a better content of air due to the effects of better soil flocculation, as calcium causes the clay particles to clump into tighter aggregates. Thus we tell clients that needed calcium (as determined by achieving the correct percentage for that soil) increases soil porosity and helps to loosen tight soils.

On the other hand, on sandy soils the problem is too much porosity – too much air – allowing the soil to dry out more quickly and lose needed moisture for growing crops. Under such circumstances the soil needs to be treated in a manner that emphasizes attracting and holding more water. Magnesium is the answer, but not too much, and not too little. The proper amount for sandy soils involves providing enough to supply at least 200 lbs / acre up to 250 lbs / acre of magnesium and yet not to exceed 20% saturation for that particular soil.

The topic of magnesium will be considered more closely next time. Meantime, if this makes sense enough to try and see how it compares to what has been done in the past, we would be pleased to try and help.

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NE FARM TOUR

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the van and headed Southwest. We wanted to sleep close to Tuesday's destination – and that meant getting to Chambersburg because we were to spend the day with Cliff Hawbaker at his Hamilton Heights farm as well as at the Emerald Valley Farm about an hour away. Both farms ship to Trickling Spring Creamery in Chambersburg – and we stopped there to meet Joe Miller for lunch and have a personalized tour of the plant (and an ice cream tasting). The Danes repeatedly said they were amazed at how sweet the food, particularly the desserts, are in the States.

The van time was not lost, though. As Maggie drove, there wasn't much silence. The Danes talked about the farm visits as Thorkild prepared reports for the farmers back home. Much conversation was had to make sure the details were accurate and to answer questions about what and why and how.... One of the very interesting things – and also one of the challenges of this trip – was dropping in to farms without our visitors really knowing what the long-term farm plan might be and without knowing what had come before. We were seeing a snapshot in time and it was useful for me to have some knowledge of the farms we were seeing to help put things into that context.

Cliff Hawbaker did a masterful job on Tuesday, combining his

passion for grass based farming with his experience in the continuum of dairying. Cliff used to have a six hundred plus herd, milking three times a day, and now has approximately four hundred twenty five animals on 100% grass and forage, milking once a day. For anyone who has met Cliff, you know that he has a real sense of the value of grass-based dairying – from the economics to the environment to the animal and soil health of it all. Because the second of the two farms we saw that day is transitioning both cattle and land to perennial pastures, it was a stellar example of how change happens under carefully planned rotational grazing, and how adaptations can be made to keep things on the rails.

We headed back to Oley to bunk at Maggie's folks again with a stop in Harrisburg for dinner. By Wednesday morning, we were all ready for some respite, what with packing a week or two of experience into two days of travel and information overload! We all congregated on the patio at the Kerns' for a slow breakfast and some long conversation about a variety of topics, from cover crops to Holistic Management decision-making and financial planning.

It was there that we were able to expand upon that very important part of what we had seen over the last two days: how to look at what we've seen from the perspective of the Holistic Management view, realizing that this is about more than "grazing tall" or not feeding grain. While Leif has some background in Holistic Management and planned grazing, and Carsten had been at one

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or two short presentations about Holistic Management, the group did not have much experience with the larger and more encompassing aspects of Holistic Management, including the decision making process and how to determine what the priority for the farmer is and what action will serve the goal of the farm the best. (That will be fuel for another essay in a future issue of NODPA news.)

By late morning, we were on the road again, headed to the Rodale Institute. It seemed silly to be within twenty minutes of Rodale and not set foot on that land so, in spite of the fact that this was one of the busiest weeks of the year for Rodale, off we went. With apologies for not being able to give us a personal tour because they were having two large meetings that day, Jeff Moyer and his crew gave us free rein to explore the cover crop areas and look at their corn planting trials. It was a great visit, and the Danes were eager to see how the equipment was set up to achieve the rolling and crimping and to see the variations on inter-seeding of crop and cover crop.

Wednesday afternoon was spent with Greg Stricker at Spring Creek Farm. Greg and his dad, Forrest, are part of an active mentoring grazing group and there was lots to see that day. The farm store and species diversity was interesting to see – and Greg also had some pretty nice cover crops started, with tillage radishes as part of the mixture. That provided more fuel for conversation as we piled into the van and headed for New York State. We stayed

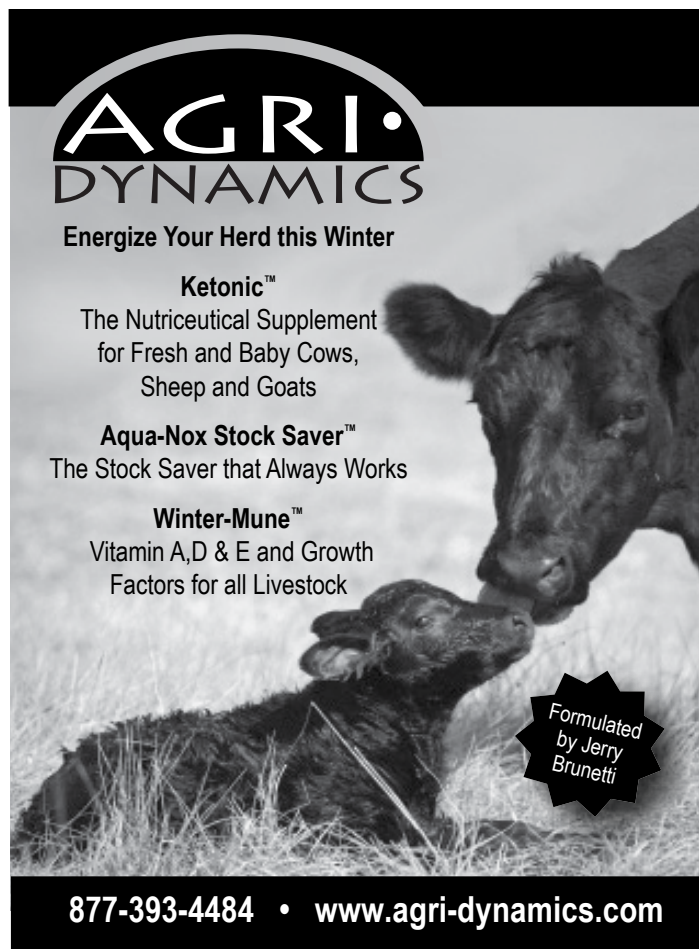
up well into the night, talking about what we'd seen, clarifying some of the aspects of Holistic Management, and sharing stories of cattle and farms and ideas. We knew it was time to pack it in when Carsten looked at me and said he wanted to know everything about Holistic Management financial planning, including writing a plan, before he left for Denmark!

Thursday morning we headed for Rob and Pam Moore's place. The weather threatened but held as Rob gave the background of their farm, talked about their experiences with Holistic Management and how it had influenced their farm.

We talked about seasonal milking and the transition to once a day milking and how and when it works for them to make that shift. The time at the Moore's farm gave us a chance to look at a simple milking parlor set up and also some innovative ideas for waterers for use in sub-zero weather. The Danes were very interested in discovering how farmers in the Northeast deal with the weather in fencing and water movement.

Back in the van, we headed for a potluck feast at the church in Nichols. Kevin and Lisa Engelbert and Liz Bawden joined us, and Lisa Blodnick was there to act as a resource about Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), since that's a specific interest for both Carsten and Thorkild. There was so much wide-ranging talk happening, I'm surprised there was any time for chewing.

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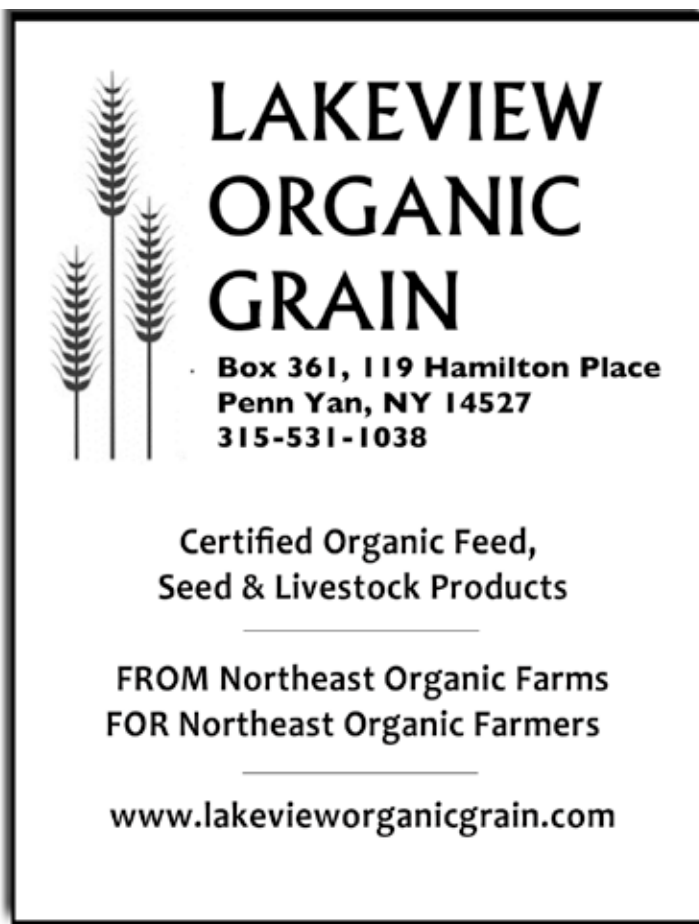
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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

NOSB Chair Opening Remarks at Recent Meeting in Kentucky

Dr. Jean Richardson, Chair NOSB

The NOSB meeting was held in Louisville Kentucky from October 27-30. It was an upbeat meeting where everyone seemed to feel that their issues were heard and discussed on the record.

Since the April meeting the NOSB has worked quietly to strengthen the public role again and improve collaboration with the NOP. Here are my Opening Comments:

As we all recall there were a number of changes which the NOP made over the last year or so. Some of these did not seem quite right and adjustments have been made. So the NOSB is once again Chairing the meeting, not the NOP. The confusion over altering the NOSB Charter in a manner which created the impression that the NOSB could be terminated in 2 years, has been corrected.

In the last few weeks the NOP has reactivated the NOSB Policy and Procedures subcommittee and we will work collaboratively with the NOP to re-write the PPM and also clarify the Sunset policy, and bring back a procedure for annotations, especially at Sunset.

As Chair I talk with the Deputy Administrator every week, so



Dr. Jean Richardson

you can be sure I share your concerns and questions. So these are all good things. And I am confident we can continue to make further improvements. But there is work for all of us to do.

Like many of you here in this room I have been involved in "organics" since long before we had the USDA Green Seal. But I was

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reminded recently when I gave a presentation to the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture that we can lose our way and forget that even though Organics is now a 35 billion dollar industry, it is still only about 3% of agriculture in terms of dollar sales, and only 1% in terms of farmable land. Quite small when put into perspective.

Then think about the USDA. It is a HUGE agency. And I found that when you walk around the extensive cafeteria in the Washington USDA Building you can not buy whole fat organic milk, let alone creamline non homogenized milk, and certainly not RAW milk!.

The NOP has been working to increase the organic literacy of the inhabitants of the USDA building but it is slow going. There are a lot of entrenched ideas and over complicated Rules and Regulations and competing interests – and we must all work with all of that.

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) component is very small part of USDA, and the NOP is a tiny part of AMS.

When the Organic Food Production Act was written in 1990 and Regulations were developed we were an even smaller sector and there was almost no processed organic food. Now processed organics is growing fast, but we have to produce organic food within the context of our US cheap food policy which reduces slim profit margins and increases competition. The Europeans

by contrast are happy to pay much more for their food, so farmers and processors in Britain and Europe can have higher profit margins for organic products.

We must work to boost consumer confidence, improve labels on products, reduce consumer confusion and maybe spend less time and energy on the one hand suggesting that our organic products may be dangerous to eat, or on the other complaining that the NOSB is failing to give every producer and processor all the chemicals they want on the National List.

So my plea with us all here today is “Pick your battles!” Working together, building partnerships is the only way to go.

We are part of a complex system, so we should use Systems Thinking, from the farm as a system to the multi-ingredient chocolate chip cookie production to the global market place, constantly challenged by change.

Let us remind ourselves that everything is interconnected, and our interlocking agriculture policies and regulations must strengthen the connections, not destroy them. Because if WE cannot work together, building partnerships between diverse stakeholder groups, we may face the economic and environmental Tragedy of the Commons articulated many years ago by Garrett Hardin. This theory outlines how individuals, acting independently, and rationally, each according to individual

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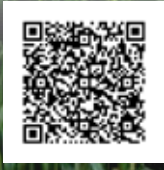
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NE FARM TOUR

continued from page 11

There was no shortage of dairy, too, including the full fat dairy preferred by the Danes, and there were pies made by Kevin's 87 year old uncle, Arthur Engelbert.

After lunch it was back in the van and off to Brothers Ridge Farm, where Drew Lewis is doing some amazing things with stock, grass and Holistic Management planning. He's running several hundred head of sheep in a planned grazing system in which the long recovery period and timely moves results in a longer residue – which works brilliantly to reduce parasite issues in the flock. Drew exemplified the generosity of the farmers on this tour. He made time and energy for the group, showing their gravity fed water system, a move of the ewes, and their bale in place feeding system (plus the changes from the previous two years of feeding areas) and a tour of the sugar bush – all the while knowing that they have to process a thousand head of newly arrived lambs the next day.

We returned to the Engelbert's Farm and continued to visit along the feed bunk until darkness drove us to the house. There we had an amazing pot luck community gathering evening at Kevin and Lisa Engelbert's kitchen table, and then it was back in the van for a ride to Cooperstown. Keeping things in the dairy family, we were headed for Brunner's bed and breakfast. There wasn't too much conversation in the latter part of that trip, though. Leif was riding shotgun and I was bringing up the rear and the rest of the crew was doing the napping for us all!

After a way too short time basking in the beauty and hospitality of the Brunner's farm and table, it was time for another chorus of "on the road again" and we were off on this last day of an amazing week. Headed to Raindance Farm, we zigged when we should have zagged and when I stopped at a small dairy to ask directions, the farmers invited us to stay and make a tour there, too. Amazing hospitality, for sure. Because of the reality of linear time, we took a rain check on that (since the "next time" trip was already in the conversation....) and headed for the patiently waiting Siobhan Griffin.

Here, Marie was able to get her "Jersey fix". We were able to see how the use of cattle and appropriate rest and recover periods helped remodel the land after the significant flood events of several years ago, and we explored the amazing diversity of that farm. After cheese and treats on the screened porch, Siobhan joined the group as we headed for lunch and then off to Dharma Lea Farm.

Here you need a little more background so you can realize how special this whole trip was and how everything was unfolding in an amazing way:

When the Danes arrived on Sunday evening, I asked the typical "do you know?" question that gets asked when there are tiny threads of connection in experience and geography. My friend and colleague, Byron Shelton, who lives in Colorado and works for the Savory Institute, had done some Holistic Management work at a big CSA in Denmark. So, when faced with a group of Danes on that first ride from the airport, I wondered aloud if anyone had run into Byron.

Leif's head snapped around and he said he knew Byron and that his

continued on page 39



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NODPA's 2nd Annual Fund Drive

continued from page 1

Worried about what the “suits” in Washington DC are up to? NODPA is the only independent organic dairy farmer controlled organization that represents your interest and can keep you informed of what is happening before it is too late to act.

Wondering how to be informed of what different processors are paying and different opportunities to sell your milk? Want to know and understand the current retail price for organic milk? Interested in new, and old, animal health care methods, new production practices, and what other producers are doing? The NODPA News print edition, the Enewsletter and the NODPA website are full of the best and most up to date information.

This year, beginning in this issue, we are expanding our coverage in the NODPA News in response to your requests. Producers will be sending in regional round-ups in order to keep everyone informed about what's happening throughout the country. The current chair of the National Organic Standards Board, Jean Richardson, will be writing a regular column to open the door to more producer involvement and

understanding of what the Board is and does. We will also add an occasional Ask the Vet column, based on the very popular NODPA Field Days workshop of the same name, and everyone is welcome to submit questions.

“We all have come to depend on NODPA's reliable information and advocacy on behalf of organic dairy farmers and it just makes sense to support this organization that does so much for us,” observed NODPA Board President Liz Bawden, “and we recognize that you regularly support your community and the organizations you value, including NODPA. Your financial support will help NODPA continue to provide the valuable resources and services that we all have come to rely on.”

If you haven't received your letter in the mail, or have misplaced it, you can complete and return the invoice form on page 37.

Also, you can pay online at <http://nodpa.com/donate.shtml>. Nora Owens would be happy to answer any questions you might have and she can be reached at:

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Pay price, feed and retail price update for November 2014

By Ed Maltby NODPA Executive Director

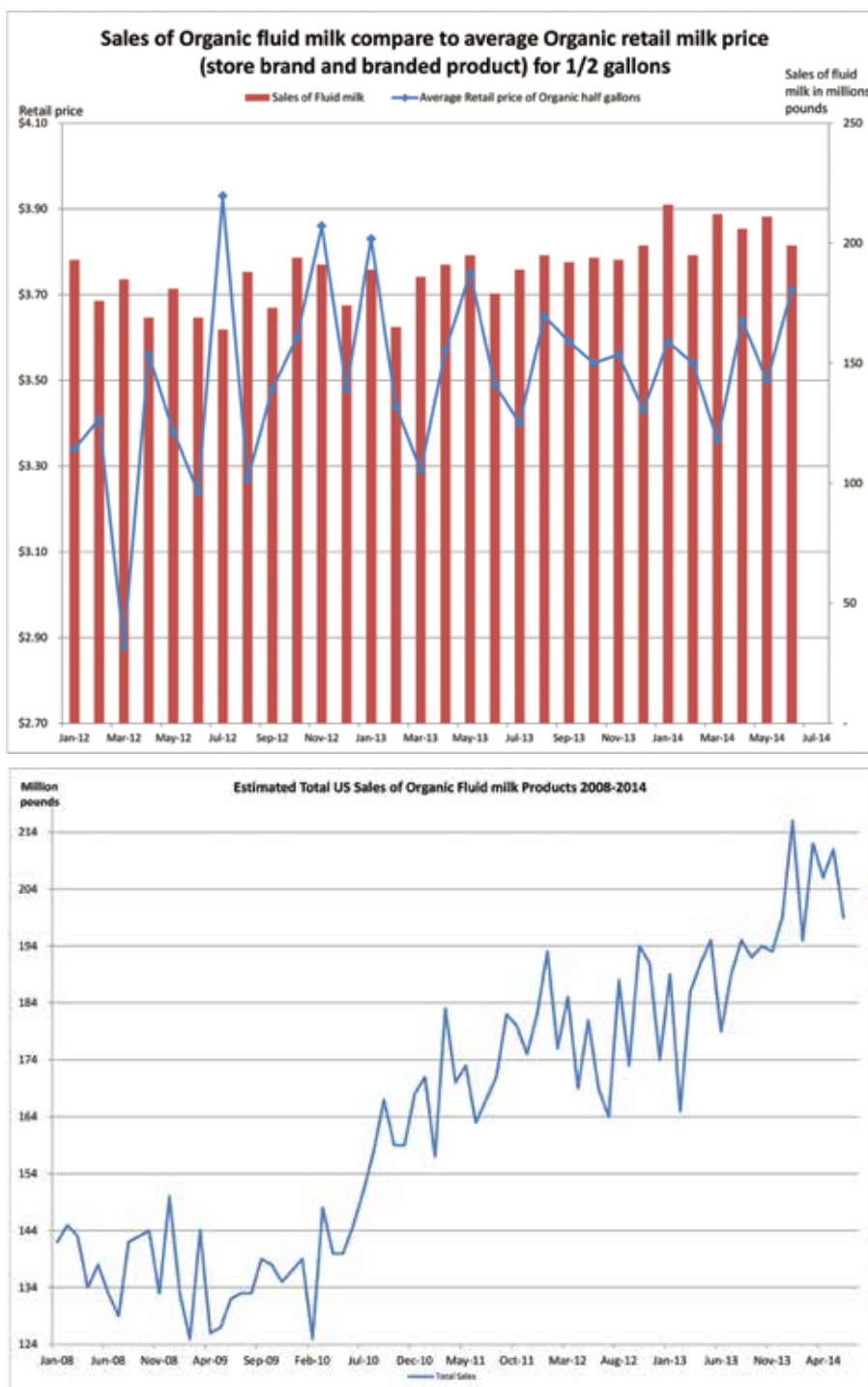
In the Northeast, competition for milk supply is increasing, with expansion plans by established and new processors who are looking for more producers in certain geographic areas. There are reports that supermarket shelves are empty and under supplied. With the current high costs of inputs causing some drop in production; some reduction in herd size because of a high cull beef price and producers leaving organic production, the supply of organic milk is not increasing enough to satisfy the increase in demand. Producers have changed production practices and economized on inputs and the only way to increase supply is to increase the base pay price to give producer confidence in long term profitability. With an average growth rate of 7-8% a year in fluid sales and increasing demand for organic dairy in manufactured product, now would be the time for organic buyers to schedule higher base pay prices for the next few years as, with higher profits for conventional producers, it makes it easier to transition to organic production as the cost of transition would be less than it has been.

Processors may be looking to imports of organic powder, beef and butter to satisfy some demand but this short term solution will do nothing for the long term stability of US organic dairy and put organic in the same place as non-organic dairy product - reliant on the fluctuations of the world market.

This increased competition and shortage of supply has forced the national brands to raise they pay price to retain producers. Horizon confirmed recently that they will be initiating a winter feed premium of \$1 for the period of Oct 1 through Dec 31, and will be adding an additional \$1 on the MAP effective Oct 1st through at least June 31, 2015.

The dairies looking for organic milk include the following:

1. Maple Hill Creamery
2. Tricking Springs - \$32.75 base, \$2.50 for BF above 3.2%.
3. Byrne Dairy (Syracuse, NY) – built a yogurt plant in Cortland, NY and are willing to pay \$40 per hundred for those within easy shipping distance



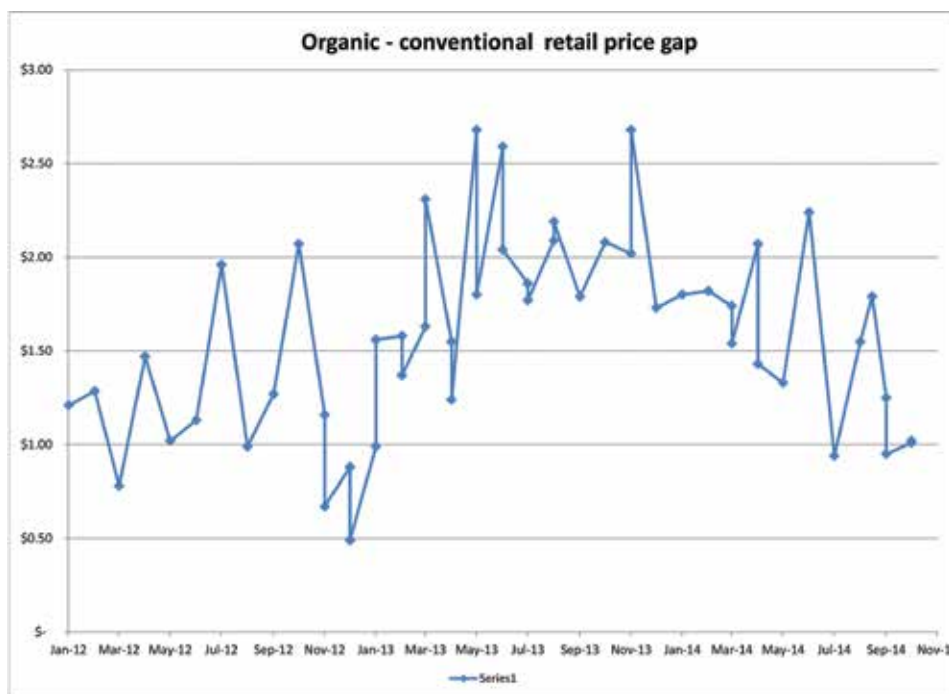
4. Natural By Nature
5. Upstate Niagara has been having solicitation meetings in northern New York and the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont
6. Chiobani (yogurt)
7. Sunrise Dairy (yogurt)
8. Stonyfield (yogurt)
9. Common Wealth Dairy (Brattleboro, VT and Arizona) are going organic but not in Brattleboro – (yogurt)

Producers are in a stronger position to negotiate for a higher pay

price to compensate for higher cost of inputs as they renew contracts, or change buyers or talk with their cooperative about the annual decisions around increases in member compensation. CROPP lost nine out of its ten Central Valley California dairies, and these former members have formed Organic West to sell milk on the open market, possibly to Commonwealth Dairies who are now processing in Arizona as well as Brattleboro, VT. There are numerous reports in the northeast of producers planning to switch buyers to take advantage of higher base prices and signing bonuses.

There is also an increase in demand for producers who qualify for the grass fed label as CROPP expands its available routes in New York and Vermont this fall. CROPP's "Grassmilk" producers can expect a \$5/cwt premium above the normal CROPP pay program when they qualify for the grass fed program. The Grassmilk standards include:

- Mandatory feeding standards
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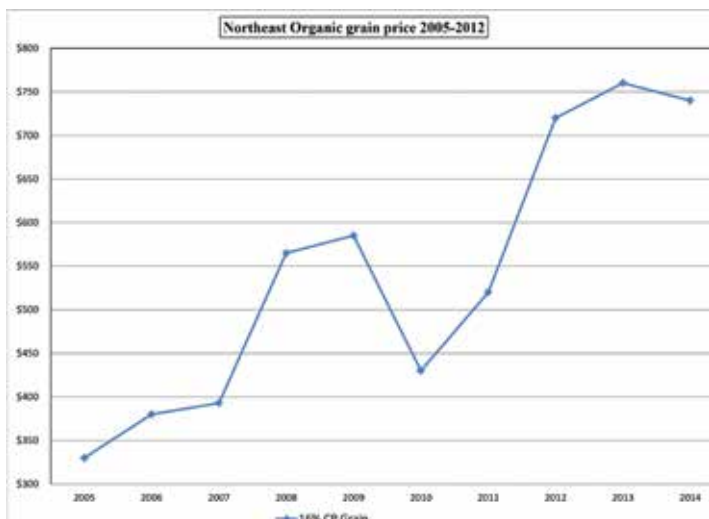
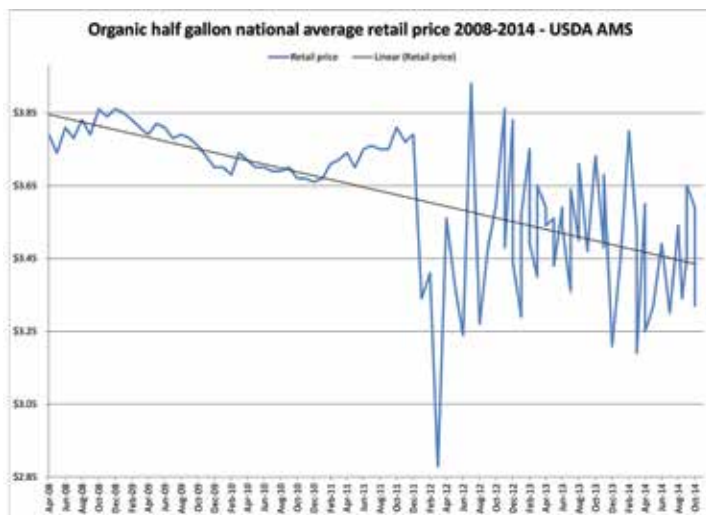
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Feed & Grain Prices

continued from page 17

The conventional pay price is still high; the beef cull price has shown no sign of dropping; and conventional feed is cheap, so there is no economic incentive to transition to organic production unless there is the promise of a future higher pay price for organic.

USDA AMS reports that organic dairy production continues to expand in Texas and the Southwest, where some producers owning large herds are aggressively seeking to expand cow numbers. A number of smaller herds of organic producers transitioning out of

organic production have been purchased in their entirety and added to existing large herds. The current high price of organic beef and organic feed continues to encourage some organic producers to leave organic dairy production. Some sales of organic cows are for slaughter, rather than to existing producers for herd expansion or transitioning into conventional production. At an auction in Oregon, organic cows sold for slaughter continued to bring a premium over conventional cows. The top ten organic cows auctioned brought an average price of \$1.7218 a pound, compared with a \$1.2963 average for the top ten conventional cows.

Varied food retail and investment enterprises are showing increasing

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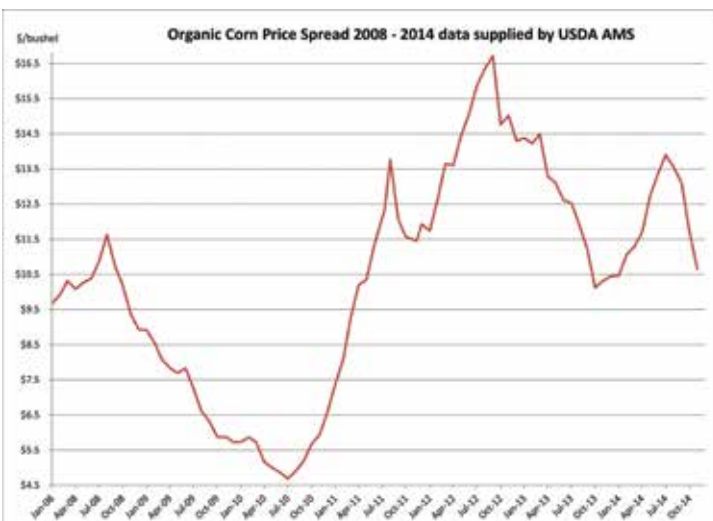
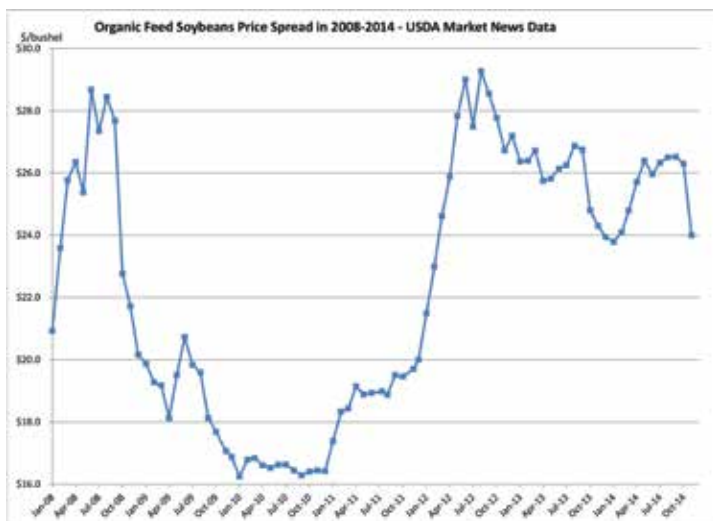
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interest in the organic dairy sector. Consultants for national super-market chains are gathering historic data of organic milk and dairy product retail prices, noting regional and national factors, as they evaluate future organic dairy product strategies.

Market researchers for various investment funds and investment banks, not traditionally involved in the organic dairy sector, are looking at data describing performance of retail pricing and product emphasis, as decisions about future capital investments are made.

With the harvest of feed in full swing there is uncertainty over yield, quality and where the price will end up. Other concerns include transportation, storage, moisture levels, drying costs, and mixed

wheat yields and protein levels due to weather challenges and associated plant diseases.

With the increase in demand for organic poultry there is a very real competition for available feed and an increase in imports. In the Midwest and the Northeast, there is an adequate supply of conserved forage and late grazing. In the West, the picture continues to be bleak as the amount of affordable hay and feed available threatens the survival of organic dairies. Prices are steady to lower on organic corn and steady for all other commodities. Demand for organic corn and soybeans is light to moderate, organic wheat is moderate to good and on other organic smaller grains light to moderate. ♦

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NODPA FIELD DAYS 2014 ROUND UP

continued from page 6

expert from Vermont, discussed her preliminary research on how farms with grass-fed herds are doing and Cliff Hawbaker, a PA producer of grass-fed milk, added his experiences in this style of production. The interest in grass-fed milk was reflected by the number of presenters on the panel, and the keen interest expressed by the attendees. Producers were not just looking for details on the higher pay price, but how they can maintain healthy cows while meeting the requirement of grass-fed labels.

The “Ask the Vet” session, which is reported in a separate article in this newsletter, was full of detailed and excellent practical animal health care information that producers can add to their toolbox in both preventing and curing problems with their livestock. Veterinarians Hubert Karreman and Cindy Lankenau, complementing each other very well during the morning workshop, continued after lunch with a two-hour, hands-on educational session in the dairy barn - which was too short. Guided by Dr. Karreman, attendees worked on selected cows to perform a physical exam and some emergency techniques, and Dr. Lankenau demonstrated acupuncture, acupressure and chiropractic care on an aged cow while discussing her use of herbal medicine – while appearing skeptical at first, the cow most definitely appreciated the session!

One of the important traditions of Field Days is the producer-only meeting that begins the Friday morning Field Days program. Restricted to organic dairy producers, this 2-hour meeting is a great opportunity to exchange information and build priorities for NODPA's work. The meeting was facilitated by past NODPA President Henry Perkins who was able to ensure that everyone had their say without dominating the meeting, and could keep participants focused. There was unanimity that NODPA should oppose any organic check-off, and should work with other groups to represent organic producers against the Organic Trade Organization work to establish a mandatory USDA check-off program. Pay price was a major topic of concern, and folks exchanged pay price information and the potential for “moving milk.” NODPA has a great resource at http://www.nodpa.com/FLAG-Brochure-may17_2008.pdf produced by the Farmers Legal Action Group with support from NODPA. Its title is “When Your Processor Requires More than Organic Certification: Additional Requirements in Organic Milk Contracts,” which has useful information about producers' rights and processors' responsibilities. Apart from producers changing their buyers, there was support for NODPA educating producers about the availability of different opportunities, especially for those that have already developed and are practicing grass-based production. It was thought that if the Maine producers in the MOO Milk pool of organic milk that needed a buyer had had a little more information, they may not have agreed to a lower pay price to subsidize the processors. There was considerable discussion about the perceived “glass ceil-



Josh Cline, Stonewall, describing the Cool Bot project.



Past NODPA Presidents Henry Perkins and Steve Morrison recognizing Ed Maltby's 10 years of service



Panel discussion of grass-fed dairy.

ing” for retail milk, and the thinking by processors that they need to fit into the cheap food policy of US agriculture rather than market a higher quality product that really does have higher costs of production. Producers believe they should not bear a greater proportion of these high input costs and deserve a fair return for their labor and capital investment. Producers felt that the answer to tight supply does not lie in increased imports but rather in higher pay price. The Origin of Livestock Rule was another topic that has been a top priority for NODPA for the last eight years, and producers again stressed the

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Regional Round-up from Organic Dairy Producers

The NODPA state reps and Board have regular conference calls to discuss the direction of NODPA and issues affecting organic dairy. During these calls producers exchange information about what is happening in their region. Producers at the NODPA Field Days suggested that we develop that exchange of information into a regular column in the NODPA News. Below is the first column and we welcome any and all producers to send contributions. The date for sending regional updates to Ed Maltby (ednodpa@comcast.net) for the next NODPA News is December 20, 2014.

Central Maine

Up here in central Maine we've had a good summer as far as weather is concerned. If all summers were like this there wouldn't be much to complain about - weather-wise. Went to the NODPA conference and came home with two observations:

1. Organic milk is in short supply.
2. Farmgate price needs to be higher (sounds like a broken record doesn't it?).

The low grain/no grain diet seems to be gathering some momentum. There may be some advantages to this, maybe a lot of advantages, but I don't believe it's going to increase the supply. Also, if you cut the grain out, you've got to replace it with forage and I'm betting that it's going to take a lot more than some people realize.

Northern Vermont

September milk per cwt was \$33.74 with premiums.

Grain was \$641.00 a ton for 14%.

Pastures were done October 20. Feeding 4th cut green chop and baleage. Has been dry all fall, raining all this week. Will start spreading manure. May do 4th cut if we get some more nice weather.

Northern New York

Grain here as of today is \$750.00/ ton 16% dairy ration from Lakeview in Penn Yan. Hay and baleage are a little short in St. Lawrence county, NY. It tests fairly well but I would estimate a shortage of 25% in quite a few areas. This has been one of the worst seasons for dry hay in several years and is the scarcest of feeds. Pastures are basically done for the year. We started feeding Oct 1st to help stretch pasture.

The late planting this spring has shorted the time corn needs to make it to grain. Most corn in my area is chopped, and did not make it into the corn cribs and grain bins. Early cut forages are testing low in my area, and late cuttings seem better. Forages yields were well below normal.

Central New York

In Central NY, some farmers are reviewing marketing options as new choices have become available. Upstate Niagara Cooperative is now taking on member farms outside of their traditional Western NY

area. Central NY based Byrne Dairy is also venturing into procuring organic milk as they start a line of organic Greek yogurt at their new facility in Cortlandville. Maple Hill Creamery is expanding their fold of grass-fed producers and Evans Farm House Creamery has had to up their pay ante and become a bit more formalized contract wise in order to not lose producers.

With the cold late spring, first cutting was down in yield. The rest of the summer wasn't quite as wet as last year, but the good amount of rain meant subsequent cuttings were good and pasture kept growing in August and September better than many years. It was not a year suited weather-wise to make dry hay. It was a very difficult year for harvesting small grains because of lack of dry weather during much of the harvest window. In our crop of spring triticale, the annual grasses kept growing when the grain was ready but combining was impossible, forcing us to eventually just mow the whole crop and bale it for bedding. Frost held off long enough for most corn to mature.

South Central NY/Northern Tier PA:

It has been dry here all season, but very wet not too far North of us. Began supplementing pasture in July. Cows will have finished off the last nibblings of pasture by the end of October. We're anxious for no grain milk routes to come to this region, and hoping demand for milk by several buyers will result in long overdue increases in the pay price. Hay and baleage seem to be in good supply locally - \$60 to \$120/ round bale for milking quality.

Southern Vermont

Our current pelleted grain price \$700/ton 13% protein

Mailbox Milk price for September milk including premiums \$34.48 @ 3.66 F, 2.9 P, 1,000 Raw, 11 Past, 122,000 SCC.

Started transition to stored feed on Oct 20, Pastures about done, earlier than normal due to dry weather earlier in season. Stored feed tested good, seems to be good market for our surplus. Cows are agreeing with feed tests, production up over 5 lbs /cow in 2 days on stored feed and still getting some fresh pasture.

One more cow to calve shortly, then no calves until May!

Pennsylvania

Here's my three cents worth. Corn is \$500 ton. 48% soy, \$1,150 ton. Roasted soybeans, \$29.50 per bushel.

SE PA:

Now in harvest, organic corn is ranging \$482 - \$530 per ton. Soybeans are \$1100 per ton. Natural By Nature began paying their 100% grass-fed producers a premium starting with August milk. They are not marketing anything different yet at this point but are looking at the possibility of a 100% grass-fed butter label early next year, with any potential GF fluid sales not coming into play for a year or more yet. The premium is based on butterfat at this point but looks to range between \$1.40 - 2.50 per cwt in actual premium. Our September mailbox

continued on page 33

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Odairy Live! Ask the Vets: Q & A

A NODPA Field Days Panel with Dr. Hubert Karreman and Dr. Cynthia Lankenau moderated by NODPA President Liz Bawden.

This workshop session at the NODPA Field Days was very educational so we thought we'd print a summary from notes taken by Lisa McCrory.

Q: What's the best treatment for a growth on a cow's eye? The producer shared a photo of it.

A: The vets diagnosed the growth as a Squamous Cell Sarcoma – on the 3rd eyelid – and said the sooner the farmer can act on it, the better. Using an approved anesthetic and forceps, snip the growth off. It is important to get a clear cut. Delays in removing it will result in it growing larger, eventually covering the whole eye, and they will likely grow back. These are common in cattle with white hair around the eye.

- Homeopathic treatments: Carcinosin –stimulates the cells to recognize cancer cells and attack them.
- Chinese Herb formula (stasis breaker) – recommend buying through Mayway Chinese Herbs or Dr. Xie's Jintang Herbal – using a reliable source that does not have contaminants is very important these days.

Q: What is the ideal amount of time for a calf to stay with its mother?

A: Dr. K: As long as the mother doesn't have Johnes, I recommend leaving the calf with its mother as long as possible, and would not wean calves any earlier than 3 months of age. A calf raised on a cow will eat 10-12 times a day, and the mother will kick the calf off at 7 months, according to one study. The cow increases in milk production until 90 days and then decreases, occurring at the same time that a calf would naturally be adding something else to their diet, thus needing less milk.

Dr. L: I agree with Hue; calves are smarter animals when they are with their moms, and a lot of metabolic diseases take place when they are stressed.

Q: Treatment recommendations for Calf Pneumonia?

A: Dr. L: If the lungs are solid, my most favorite herbal combinations are: Thyme, Eucalyptus leaves, Usnea (old man's beard), and Blood Root. Homotoxicology products, such as those produced by Heel, can be put in the water for all affected calves. Also, Echinacea angustifolia can be used.

Dr. K: Dry bedding, fresh air, and high forage diets are the best preventatives. I suggest using an IBR PI3 intra nasal vaccine (like Inforce) for respiratory disease. It is effective even when an animal is showing signs of illness. Additional treatment options include

the use of injectable antibodies (like Bovi-Sera) and Immunoboost. If the calves are inside and they are starting to cough and it is nice outside, then turn them outside and that may be all you need to do. Helpful herbs: garlic, ginseng, goldenseal, and berberis.

Q: Treatment for Scours in Cows and Scours in Calves?

A: Dr. K: For a cow – don't feed anything but dry hay. They should start clearing up within 5 days. Calf scours – In first couple weeks it is either Roto or Corona virus. Get over it with lots of TLC and electrolytes. If they don't improve, it is probably E. coli. Immunoboost is known to be very effective. Also, you can vaccinate first calf heifers, as they are springing, with Scour Guard 4KC. Chamomile and mallow are good for soothing the intestinal tract. If a very young calf is scouring, feed milk more often and alternate with electrolytes.

Dr. L: My favorite treatment for acute GI problems is a bulk powder product called 'Early Comfort' from the Kan Herb Company. It is specifically useful against really aggressive gram-negatives. It will get the scours under control within a few days. I also likes black walnut tincture for Coccidia; Golden seal (small amounts only), and Agrimony if you are seeing blood in the manure.

Q: Please explain 'Happy Lines'

A: Dr. K: They are also known as "health stripes" on the healthy, shiny cow. They are related to essential fatty acids of the cows. They can be seen in totally confined CAFO's as well as organic grazed herds and are based on good nutrition.

Q: Grass-fed Milk question

A: Dr. K: Energy is the absolute limiting factor.

Dr. L: Very few of my clients have stayed grass-fed; perhaps it is due to excessive use of Roundup and the sickness of the soil in her area. Once they try it, SCC goes up, immune system goes down. My farmer clients notice too much stress and stop before there is a real problem.

Q: If transitioning to grass-fed: what would be other challenges to look for?

A: Dr. K: Internal and external parasites. Calves are often forgotten about after they are weaned and go out in the same pasture year after year.

Q: Treatment for a Puncture in the hoof

A: Dr. K: Use Ledum and Hypericum (homeopathic) for punctures, Tetanus antitoxin shot would be the approach. Hydrogen peroxide – open up carefully and infuse with Hydrogen Peroxide.

Dr. L: Hypericum with Ledum, plus also an herb called Andrographis (used internally, it builds up the liver while doing its work) for contained infection. A Chinese herbal product called "supine joint" can be used as a poultice to draw it out.

Q: Foot abscess have been seen on a number of cattle. Would this be nutrition related? Stones in lane? Especially as they seem to be recurring. MUNs are running 7 and 8. Also have some hairy heel warts.

A: Dr. K: White-hoofed animals (Holsteins) have more of these problems. Check that laneways are in good shape, and that there is a fine stone on top of sharp stones that rise up (NRCS). Zinpro products are useful for hoof health/nutrition. Address the walk ways and mineral nutrition

Dr. L: Homeopathic Graphites will strengthen the feet.

Other comments: As farmers are reducing grain, they are not necessarily increasing their mineral mixes in the small amount of grain that they feed. One producer described his use of Redmond's mineral (conditioner), kelp and Redmond's salt. Kelp is good for the soil microbes and good for stomach microbes, too. What goes out in the manure adds biology to the soil.

Q: Calving paralysis: what is the best thing to do?

A: Dr. L: Hypericum/Arnica – use Homeopathics right away for pain. Then use acupuncture to relieve pain so she can get up. Then use herbs: Solomon seal (works on the spinal stuff) – take the roots (if you harvest on your own always leave 3 plants). Also Mullein root and Stinging Nettle root. Grind up and feed to the cow or infuse. Pain control is first. Using Willow Bark itself is better than aspirin. Take some of the young branches and take the bark from the young branches.

Dr. K: Acupuncture, Arnica/Hypericum. To prevent it, when the calf's head is out and the two legs are coming, make an 'x'

with the front legs and turn so that the calf's back bone is coming out at 11:00 or 1:00 to the cows backbone. You can use Banamine (Flunixin) – use early – keeps inflammation down. Aspirin is better for muscular-skeletal pain.

Follow-up: What should be the timing of homeopathic dosing? The more dynamic the disease, the more dynamic the dosing; and lower potencies respond faster but higher potencies have a longer effect.

Q: De-worming calves and older cows?

A: Dr. K: Run fecal samples, put under microscope. If you see fewer than 10 eggs per slide-no treatment is necessary. If 10-20 eggs are seen, do something. If more than 20 eggs per slide, treat with a parasiticide.

Ferro is a clay leachate very high in iron, Mg, and other minerals. It constipates the calf quickly. Use 10 cc's once a day for 8 days. It is intensely bitter, so cut with something sweet to make it palatable. Can use a Fenbendazole wormer (Safeguard crumbles) – though this must be determined by a vet that it is needed (in person or over the phone).

For 1st calf heifers, run fecal and check it out. You can also use Ivermectin. With the pastured pigs at the Rodale Institute Farm, they use wormwood, black walnut hulls, and garlic. Homeopathic products he would use include: Chenopodium, Santonitum and Antonitum – but with an animal who is loaded, would not turn to Homeopathy alone.

Dr. L: Black walnut is also a thyroid tonic, building up their immune system. For horses black walnut is toxic. ITN (Institute for Transformational Nutrition) makes anti-parasite powder.



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RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Environment and Behavior: Biodiversity and Cattle Well-being

By Juan Alvez, Pasture Technical Coordinator, UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture

Today, many people are seeking to understand the complex interactions involved in food production and their implications for both environmental sustainability and human health. Here at the University of Vermont, a group of colleagues wondered in particular about the connections between soil biodiversity, forages, animal health and human health.

In 2012, our research team embarked on a collaborative, long-term study focused on assessing how ecologic habitat disruption is associated with livestock wellbeing and health, and how those in turn impact human wellbeing. And with a wider lens, we rapidly conclude that these elements do not exist in isolation. Numerous researchers emphasize (and our preliminary data support) that agriculture both receives and provides a diverse array of benefits from healthy ecosystems, while also imposing dis-services when disrupted.

In the last decades, population growth reaching unprecedented 7.2 billion people, coupled with higher living standards is increasingly demanding dairy products. Meeting this demand has required both advancing the agricultural frontier and intensification of the



'Rumen Bacteria'

production process, burdening already-degraded ecosystems with consequences on habitats, forests, biodiversity, soils, water and rural livelihoods.

Most researchers studying livestock and conservation focus on the ramifications of how livestock affects biodiversity.

We decided to approach it the other way around. We consider that managing for increased biological diversity in pasture-based dairy production systems in the Northeast positively contributes to improved livestock well-being, health and productivity, and creates

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a positive feed-back ecological service loop that benefits soil and forage composition. An integral approach to soils, forage and diet, rumen microbiology and milk quality is necessary to assess how cows are affected.

By studying if and how this affects cattle well-being, some of the questions we want to answer are whether there are risks of transmission to wildlife and humans.

The recent emergence of methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* in livestock, human campylobacter outbreaks linked to ruminants and raw-milk consumption, and the emergence of Schmallenberg virus associated with reproductive failure in cattle represent a few recent examples of the shifting balance in microbial evolution and ecology.

In general, there is a strong belief that healthy ecosystems with minimally disturbed soils, adequate access to a diverse, high quality forage mix, and clean water have a robust correlation with cows' wellbeing and milk quality. However, although the disease regulation processes in humans served by healthy ecosystems, with high levels of biodiversity, is a growing and controversial topic; there has been limited research on the relationships between changes in biodiversity, livestock health, and farm management and productivity.

Hence, there is a pressing need to look at the whole picture to draw connections that can provide answers. For these reasons, the approach has been to understand the linkages that may exist among soils, forages, animal intake, rumen microbiome, and a comprehensive bacteriological and milk fatty acid study.



Cows wearing electronic loggers to monitor grazing activity

Understanding the response of ruminant and environmental microbial communities to specific management practices is critical to optimizing farm productivity and product quality and enhancing ecosystem-based management of farms and agricultural landscapes.

Dairy cattle and dairy farm systems supports numerous microbial communities including, mutually beneficial relationships between dairy cattle and their microbial symbionts (rumen microbiota). These cellulolytic bacteria break down plant materials providing cows' a source of energy.

Skin and gastrointestinal microbiota, also appear to be critical for normal immune-system development and may protect against colonization of opportunistic pathogens. Our understanding of the

continued on page 29



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ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM**Hamilton Heights Dairy Farm & Emerald Valley Dairy Farm: South Central PA
Milking Acres, Not Cows**

continued from page 1

Cliff's nephew, Daniel Lehman. They farm 869 acres of which 180 are rented and 689 are owned. Crops grown include 660 acres of fenced pastures, 110 acres of hay land, and the rest is wooded.

The Hawbakers milk a total of 425 cows and have an additional 281 young stock of varying ages. Their cows are all crosses from three different breeds: Holstein (their original breed), Jersey (for size and milk components), and Finnish Ayrshires - a dual purpose breed with excellent body condition, and genetics that adapt well to grass. They started cross breeding their cows around the same time period that they purchased their second farm (2005). Their goal with cross breeding has been to move from the 1450 lb Holstein that they used to milk, to a smaller cow, about 1100 lbs, with good condition, greater longevity, and good grazing efficiency. Cliff is happy with what they have today, acknowledging that most of their cows are closer to 1250 lbs, but they have the stature that they were shooting for with great body condition.

Transition to Grass-based Dairying

Prior to having a grass-based farm, Cliff was milking 3 times a

day, feeding his cows in confinement and producing 21,000 lbs of milk per cow. Interested in improving herd health, balancing the soils, crops, and improving their nutrient management practices, Cliff and his family made a big leap from a confinement dairy to a pasture-based operation.

They started gradually in 1998, with 20 acres the first year and 50 acres the second year, offering pasture primarily to their dry cows and first calf heifers. By the year 2000 they quit growing crops on the home farm (Hamilton Heights Dairy) and converted the whole farm to pasture. Putting the infrastructure in place took a couple years and included seeding pastures to perennial swards, and building fence, laneways, and water systems.

With a desire to reduce some of the animal impact from the home farm, the Hawbakers had an opportunity to purchase what is now known as Emerald Valley Farm in 2005. They started milking cows there in 2006 and spent the next two years fencing it and planting perennial swards.

Cliff talks about his pastures in a way that articulates his deep understanding of his grass-based system and his 'whole [farm]



Maggie Hawbaker



Cliff Hawbaker with some of his cows

under management'; "I can see, taste, and feel the pasture", he says. This depth of understanding did not come to him over night. Cliff realizes that for anyone new to grazing and organic production, they need to learn fundamental entry-level concepts before diving into management decisions more appropriate for a seasoned grass-based farm. "We need to be careful about the advice that we give new or beginning farmers," he says. "Trying to take on graduate level concepts when you are only needing High School level concepts is dangerous; you could lose your shirt."

Cliff makes sure that his pastures are still in the vegetative stage when they are ready to be grazed, and manages the livestock so that they "take half and leave half".

As a rule he also likes to select some of his acreage each year and give that land a rest. Those fields become summer stock-piled pasture; a practice that is a gain for the land and the soil biology. At the end of the grazing season Cliff puts a lot of animals on the fallowed acreage and the livestock graze and trample the forage, benefiting the soil biology, and keeping his livestock on pasture as far into the winter months as possible. "Give yourself a rest, let everything go, then put a lot of animals on it. You don't lose, you actually gain", says Cliff.

With Cliff's grazing model, he is convinced that the wealth on the farm will double between 7 and 14 years. When mentoring others, Cliff encourages farmers to focus on land, grass and the art of grazing. "Grass is #1. What is the right thing to do at the right time for the right reasons? All of our existence comes from the sun. If you appreciate and respect life, then your system will be sustainable," he explains.

Once a day Milking

In 2006, Cliff and his family decided to switch to once a day milking, reducing labor and certain operational expenses, while adding quality to their lifestyle. They started first with the Emerald Valley farm, and then followed suit in 2008 with their Ham-

ilton Heights Farm. Though overall milk production went down, milk solids increased and costs of production went down. Additional time for tasks such as calving, breeding, haying, managing the pastures, and family has benefited both farm enterprises.

Challenging Years followed by Organic Transition

With two grass-based dairies in place, they entered what Cliff refers to as 'the learning years'. The economy took a dive in 2008, conventional milk prices started to plummet in 2009, and there was a drought in 2010. Having grass-based operations probably helped them survive through these tough years a little better than others.

In 2010, a few of the organic milk buyers started to visit Cliff, encouraging him to transition to organic. At the same time, there was a growing interest in grass-fed organic milk with added premiums being offered. Cliff and his family decided that certifying their farms would fit with their farm mission, but they would not steer from their grass-based principles of milking acres, not cows. Cliff is quick to remind people that "the cake is in the pasturing & good management. The Price for organic milk is the icing on the cake"

They began their transition in 2010; transitioning the land was not difficult, as it had been managed according to the organic standards for over 3 years. They had to feed and manage their livestock organically for a full calendar year to complete their one time whole herd transition, but since they weren't feeding any grain, the financial burden for their transition was minimal. In 2011 they started shipping their milk to Trickling Springs, a creamery located just down the road from them their home farm that produces organic grass-fed milk products including butter, fluid milk, cream, yogurt and raw milk cheeses.

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FEATURED FARM

continued from page 27

Replacement Heifers:

The Hawbakkers raise about half their heifers each year, keeping enough of their replacement stock to maintain a 20-25% cull rate. Calves that remain in the herd come mostly from dams who conceived on first conception. Calves that don't stay on the farm are normally sold at 1-2 weeks of age. Animals who do not gain well in the first 6 months do not stay in the herd for very long.

They have a dual season calving system in which 70% of their cows calve in the fall and 30% calve in the Spring. The pay price for fall/winter milk tends to be higher for most organic producers due to winter milk premiums, but Cliff is convinced that fall calving is also most profitable for the grasses, the land and the livestock. He explains that when a fall calving cow is in the tail end of her lactation (May), and she is grazing nutritious spring growth, she will gain condition, the high quality pasture will contribute to growing a healthy calf, and her milk production will increase. Calving in August or September is also a great time of year for a calf to get started.

Animal Health

These days, because their herd so seldom has health issues, Cliff feels like sometimes he doesn't have enough practice on how to deal with them when they happen. If he gets an acute case, he will usually call a fellow farmer or a veterinarian for assistance or advice.

Cliff focuses on high microbial life for the soil, and a strong immune system for the livestock, calling it the 'engine that keeps the animal healthy'. "When we focus on the soil with grasses, we also need the right number of animals to match the forage production," says Cliff. When he addressed that on his farm, it came alive.

Building Relationships with Fellow Farmers

Cliff spends a lot of time staying connected with fellow producers, speaking at conferences, and mentoring new/young farmers. When he is looking for information, he reaches out to his fellow farmers all over the world. He also has a small group of Northeast producers that he stays in touch with during the growing season. With the same or similar weather conditions and season, and doing similar things, they make a point to have weekly phone meetings to check in, share, and 'sharpen their tools' together. "It is a give and take," says Cliff.

When it comes to networking and searching for information, Cliff has a saying that he follows: 'have a one-on-one relationship if it is a farmer, but keep outside influences at arm's length'. This means that he learns from his fellow farmers, but individuals such as his milk buyer, veterinarian, feed dealer, NRCS agent, seed dealer, etc can only advise him on what they think. Most of these individuals don't have boots on the ground; they are not in the trenches farming every day and putting these ideas into practice.

Cliff also spends time helping young farmers get started with grass-based farming. He often speaks at conferences where he gives a couple different types of talks: One is focused on his personal journey of their two farms, sharing their grazing experience, and their "Green is Grass" approach to managing their farms. The second talk he likes to give is one on business planning for graziers, focusing on where you are and where you want to go.

These presentations often bring opportunities for Cliff to mentor a few farms through an in-depth, 8-step procedure that he has created. Through his mentoring and his talks, he brings to the table certain concepts and principles to farming that have brought him to where he is today:

- All livestock sold must go back into dairy/cow acct to address land, livestock, retirement, and capital expenditures. "You cannot sell an animal for the cost of production," says Cliff, "that money cannot go to operate the farm. That is life that you respect and honor; it is a gift."
- We manage for what we want from our goals; we must have a margin for every input, but cannot take away from our original investment of the land.
- "A tractor is expensive to operate and will have zero book value in 5-10 years; livestock will always have a value".
- "At the end of life, it is the land and the legacy that you leave behind"

You can reach the Hawbakkers by phone, fax, or email: phone: (717) 263.9577, Fax: (717) 263.6611, Email: hhdhf@innernet.net. ♦



December 2014

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RESEARCH & EDUCATION

Biodiversity & Cattle Well-Being*continued from page 25*

magnitude and diversity of the microbiota of dairy cattle and dairy-farm environments is limited, and we have insufficient knowledge of how specific farm management practices influence microbial ecology and ecosystem services.

Part of the limitation of understanding microbial ecology is because most microbes are resistant to culture and isolation by classical methods. The recent development of metagenomics enables us to overcome these limitations.

In our study, we will identify and demonstrate methods for grass-based livestock farmers to: 1) improve productivity, milk quality, reduce costs, and increase net farm income; and 2) conserve soil, improve water quality, and protect natural resources; 3) demonstrate how real-time monitoring of grazing behavior and forage intakes allows farmers to optimize forage utilization, rumen activity, and milk composition.

By optimizing these production parameters, pasture-based dairy farmers may simultaneously produce healthier milk products for human consumption, advance the health and well-being of

their cattle, and reduce operational costs and environmental impacts.

For more information, contact Juan P. Alvez, Ph.D. at the Center for Sustainable Agriculture, 802-656-6116 or jalvez@uvm.edu.

The Project Team consists of: Joe Roman (Rubenstein School for the Environment and Natural Resources, and Gund Institute for Ecological Economics Fellow), Juan Alvez (UVM Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture), John Barlow (UVM Department of Animal Sciences) and Jana Kraft (UVM Department of Animal Sciences). This study has been funded since 2013 by UVM REACH Grant and Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NE SARE).



Cows grazing a diversified sward



Through the use of Impro Products we have seen considerable benefits in maintaining and improving milk quality as well as a healthy herd. We have used MVP Dairy Boost for our cows quite a few years now. MVP Dairy Boost was used in place of a competitive product and we found this product to help maintain lower somatic cell count (SCC) and have seen better udder health in the herd. During stress periods we also use Dairy M Caps, Dairy R Caps or Fresh Cow C Caps as needed.

In our calf program we also have used Lacto Paste B for 4 to 5 years to help build overall calf health and promote good gut health. Lacto Paste B boosts calves with stomach ailments and gets them off on a much faster pace. Two other great products to give calves a boost are Impro Tec 500 and Opti-Start; both can be added to the milk or water.

Overall our farm has greatly benefited from the use of Impro Products and we love the products and natural ingredients. These benefits have driven milk quality and premiums higher for our farm. We won't go without it!

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Irasburg, VT

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LETTERS & COMMENTS

***To the editor(s) of the
NODPA newsletter:***

I enjoy reading articles about new ways to do things. We are always looking for ways to make improvements in labor savings, increased profitability and better quality of life. I understand that often as organic producers we need to think outside of the box. More than once on our farm we have chosen to do things that are not always the most economical because they make sense based on what Mother Nature has given us or just feel right in some other sense. However, the article titled “Madre Method of Calf Rearing” in the July-August 2014 edition was so far off in its explanation of why it should work for everyone, that it compelled me to write this letter.

I appreciated that the author tackled the economics of this method first. I was disappointed that as I read that section of the article, there was no financial data to support anything the author wrote about. The best we as readers got from it was “I guarantee that on any given farm the profit from one cow’s lactation is less than the out of pocket expense it takes to raise a calf by hand for the first year”. That’s why I’m supposed to adopt this method – based on his guarantee?

The next section of the article was on Quality of the Livestock. Here NODPA chose to highlight the following: “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.” I wholeheartedly agree that if I could get to a 4% cull rate, I could raise my replacements cheaply. I do believe that this farmer for one year (or possibly more) has had a 4% cull rate. However, put some numbers to this. If he’s only culling 2 cows per year, that means in 10 years 20 cows have left the farm and that 45 of the milking herd are 10 years or older. In 20 years, 40 cows have left the farm and 25 of the milking herd are 20 years or older. And, in 30 years, only 60 of those original 65 cows have left the herd and there are five 30 year old cows on the farm and part of the milking string. Seriously!?

I am supposed to read this and think I should try a new practice on my farm based on an economic guarantee and the premise that in 30 years I’ll still be milking cows that are nursing their mothers today? That’s absurd. I’m not saying using nurse cows can’t work, but at a time when organic dairies are going out of business as fast as new ones are starting, I’d expect NODPA to present articles that give us solutions that we can apply to our farms with at least some amount of credible data to support the change.

***Michelle Benrud
Goodhue, MN***

Dear Michelle:

Thank you for your letter, we appreciate that you are continuing the conversation.

The first thing we would like to say is that if your calf raising system is working for you and you are happy with the results, by all means keep your system. Any system must work within the farm context, and be appropriate to the goals of the operation.

We share our methods, successes and failures as a way for us all to learn from each other and continue the conversation. The article is not meant to frustrate you, only to inspire you to think about your farm in fresh and new ways—in the end the research (and financial data) to improve your system must come from within your system. Our numbers are not really relevant. You must look at your numbers.

After developing, using, and now teaching this method for several years we have learned that the numbers vary greatly from farm to farm. Because of this, I will not fall into the trap of providing numbers for you to look at—it many times confuses the issue more that helps.

I would rather that you determine what the cost of raising your calves is, what the gross and net from one lactation is on your farm, what are the possible benefits that the best replacements might bring to your system, long term and short term.

In our system, and within our holistic context, we want and have placed a high value on the very best replacements. We are not looking for the cheapest method of raising calves—we want the best method. It is our opinion that the best replacements are the least expensive.

I think that many of the principles of a truly functional regenerative agriculture are lost on farmers today. We most often look to a higher milk price to save us. Much of what farmers knew about farming and breeding has been outsourced to semen companies, and academics and “experts” with disastrous results.

In his seminal book, *Herdsmanship*, Newman Turner says it far more eloquently than I can, “There are, in my opinion, three practically untapped sources of saving: (1) Improved herd health. (2) Increased production efficiency, i.e. to breed for a better efficiency in the cows ability to convert food into milk. (3) To breed longevity. These are all sources of increased income or economy which have largely been ignored in our efforts to get more milk to the almost complete exclusion of any other policy.”

The Madre Method is a key part of Dharma Lea attaining the three goals Turner so clearly articulates. In the end, the raising of replacements cannot be separated from a functional breeding program. A successful breeding program is one that has profit in mind, through efficiency, longevity and health....rather than short term milk production.

Let’s be honest, organic dairies are going out of business, and other

organic dairies are thriving, what creates this difference? While it is obvious there are many contributing factors--debt load, land availability, etc. --one of the prominent contributing factors is that farmers do not know their numbers and are not making decisions that are based on the whole system. Don't get me wrong, I do believe there is real inequity in the dairy business and it is difficult for all farmers. However, I do not think we gain one thing by focusing on these problems. I believe we need to find ways to work with the resources we do control in ways that are good for farmers, the farm, the cows and the community. In short, I believe in holistic management. I can assure you, here at dharma lea we do know our numbers, and we have documented that raising the replacements on their mothers is one of the best, most economically sound decisions we have made in the last 8 years. It has helped create the very real "profit" that Mr. Turner is talking about.

I do not agree with your math regarding replacements, and I would also say that I don't know how long these cows will last yet—I only know that the madre method will allow them to last longer, produce most efficiently and stay healthier than any other method—and that is what makes it the most economical way to raise them. You are correct that our cull rate is low this year. It will be for the next few years. When we began, our cull rate was 40% like many other farms. We will probably end up at an 8-10% cull rate, which equates to 10-12 lactations per cow.

I would like to thank NOPDA for expanding the conversation,

to include the new ideas and voices coming into agriculture—we are entering a renaissance of sorts in agriculture and we need to be ready to adapt to the changing landscape. We believe Agriculture will be changed for the better by delivering innovation to the system. Lets keep our ears and hearts open to innovative voices, and show respect for all the different approaches.

Thank you,

Paul and Phyllis Van Amburgh

Dharma Lea, Sharon Springs, NY

dharmalea@gmail.com

Field Days Thanks

I wish to say THANK YOU for the meeting at Stonewall Farm. The meeting was most excellent and the facilities were outstanding, as well as the food was great. The various sessions were informative, as well as interesting. Thanks again. Great Job.

Mike Damon

pmd1@stny.rr.com

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Classified Ads

Livestock:

Looking for non-Holstein organic dairy cattle (cert. or not) in the middle of the country. I'm in Kansas but can travel a ways if necessary. Most of what I see posted here is from New England, too far, but stuff west of Appalachia works. Thanks, Pete Gasper, Email: farmer1@gasperfarm.com

Looking to purchase a Jersey bull, or mixed breed bull that is fairly good in size. Also in search of water bowls (for a tie barn), and stainless steel pipe.

Please contact: Lee by phone at: 802-253-3990. Farm located in Stowe, VT.

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Certified Organic dry hay available: 4x5 round bales (or larger) Approx. 800 lbs. mostly mixed grass and clover-a little alfalfa; 50+ July first cut stored outside-no rain, \$30 each; 80+ bales second cut-had a little rain- \$40 each; 100+ bales second cut-no rain-stored under cover- \$50 each. Loyal Martin, Philadelphia, NY, phone: 315 783 0223.

NOFA-NY Certified Organic 2014 Crops. Dry Hay (Timothy/grass mix) and Bedding Hay. Both 4 1/2 X 4 Round bales. Also, first and second cut 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 email Mitchellorganics@Hotmail.com

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GOA Certified round bales 4x4 inline wrapped 1st, 2nd, and 3rd cutting all hay has been tested and we can give you results upon request delivery is available call for pricing. Contact: Paul Hargett, Email: hargetthay@gmail.com, Phone: 315 246 2998, Locke, NY

Late 1st cut 2013 NOFA NY certified organic 4x5 round bales of hay. Net wrapped stored outside easy location to load. \$20 bale. Contact: Tammy Thomas, Greenwich, NY, codyt1@wildblue.net Phone: 518-727-1712.



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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Regional Round-Up

continued from page 21

price was \$35.11 @ 4.37 BF, 3.26 P, and a \$.10 quality premium. GF premium came to about \$2.39 of that if the numbers are understood properly. Facing normal fall transition to stored feeds issues keeping the DMI up while balancing with dwindling pasture volumes. Excellent fall growth though and on pastures used for calves are set to graze into January. Stored feed appears to be better quality than last year and cows are milking slightly better than a year ago accordingly. A year ago sold A2 dairy cows because of surplus and this year thanks to the high beef prices are culling off the bottom of the herd to loosen cash. Facing serious shortfalls in cash with some hay vendors having to wait 4-5 months on payment. Cost of production is very close to mailbox pay price and margins are razor thin.

Midwest - Wisconsin

Some fields were not planted at all this year as the rains just kept coming in. Others were planted late due to excessive moisture and so corn is behind normal with frost finishing it off before mature. Crops are really variable due to timing of planting and rains that prevented any cultivation. Too much rain this fall has folks scrambling to try to get it off the field. Test weights and yields are light because of weather conditions. Dry hay was near impossible this year as the rains kept coming. Pasture

is still providing a small portion of the ration. Stored forage quality is lacking as much of it was put up on the weather's schedule not at optimum feed value. Bedding is also in short supply.

Competition is out there for organic milk as the supply is short. Producers have been able to secure better prices if they are able to move their milk. When you factor in the feed costs and the lack of good quality after all the expenses to make that crop the price paid for milk is not adequate. Not even the prices being quoted to try to move milk are enough. Folks I visited with are reporting that their production is down due to feed and they believe it won't fully recover until next year's crops—that is if we have a more normal cropping year.

As supplies remain short, now is the time to work together to secure a better price for everyone. ♦

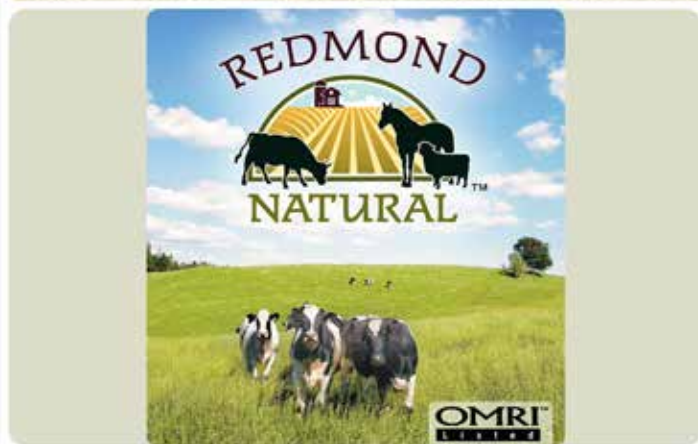


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NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

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

Robust discussions about preventing gangrene mastitis, constipation and respiratory illnesses

Diagnosed with gangrene mastitis, a cow had to euthanized. The farmer described the sudden onset of symptoms, and asked the group for suggestions on how to prevent this from happening again. A vet on this list responded that there are essentially two causes of gangrene mastitis - either Clostridium or Staph aureus. Clostridium is a quick killer; it is characterized by a low fever (102.7 to 102.9). It is a soil borne organism, and is one of those rare things that you see every 20 years or so. It is definitely not contagious. The Staph aureus type is characterized by a high fever (105 or so). It is called "blue bag" in sheep, and is fairly treatable with antibiotics, and the udder won't slough off as it does with the Clostridial type when treated quickly with penicillin.

"For any gangrene, if the cow is up and relatively young, there is a good prognosis if treatment is instituted right away. No dilly-dallying. If a cow is down with any kind of gangrene mastitis and is older and/or grunting with each exhalation of breath, they will be dead in about 2 hours."

A producer had a 4-month old calf that was seriously constipated. His vet had installed a trocar port into the rumen to release some gas, and put in a cup of olive oil and a gallon of water. It seemed that his rumen was full, but his colon was empty. It was suggested that the calf may have eaten some of his bedding, and it plugged up the digestive tract somewhere. The oil should help to move things along, but in case it is due to a lack of peristalsis, the use of senna or nux vomica was suggested. Phyto-gest, with nux vomica, gentian, ginger and fennel, was recommended for bloat, constipation, and colic (as long as there is no fever present).

At another farm, a producer noticed that a 5-week old bull calf, still with his dam on pasture, exhibited rapid, raspy breathing. Otherwise, the calf seemed perfectly healthy with no other signs of respiratory illness. The raspy sound was worse while laying down. The only change the farmer noted in the calf was his coat, which had changed from a dark black to a very faded black. Another farmer suggested checking the calf for intestinal parasites and lungworm. The lungworms may be responsible for the raspy breathing, and a heavy load of intestinal parasites may cause a copper deficiency.

Liz farms with her husband and son in Hammond, NY. You can reach Liz by phone or email: 315-324-6926, bawden@cit-tele.com.

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 Nora Owens at:

Email: noraowens@comcast.net

Phone: 413-772-0444

Go to the following web page for more information:

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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

November 16-17, 2014

IOWA Organic Conference: Rekindling the Light Within
University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA

Keynote Speaker Mary Berry, Executive Director of the Berry Center. For more information: contact Dr. Kathleen Delate, kdelate@iastate.edu, or www.sustainability.uiowa.edu/2014-iowa-organic-conference.

November 19, 2014

Effective Use of Electric Fencing to Improve Grazing Management and Enhance Soil Health
Webinar by USDA NRCS, 2 pm Eastern Standard Time

Participants will gain a basic understanding of how temporary fencing is used in intensive grazing systems, and they will learn how proper operation and maintenance of equipment is key to successful management. Presented by USDA NRCS East National Technical Support Center. Contact Holli Kuykendall, holli.kuykendall@gnb.usda.gov, or go to: www.conservationwebinars.net/webinars/effective-use-of-electric-fencing-to-improve-grazing-management-and-enhance-soil-health

November 21-23, 2014

Restoring Ecosystems to Reverse Global Warming
Tufts University, Medford, MA

Organized by Biodiversity for a Livable Climate, in collaboration with the Institute of the Environment and the Center for International Environment and Resource Policy at Tufts University.

For more information and registration: www.bio4climate.org/conference-2014, or email: climate2014@bioclimate.org.

December 2-5, 2014

2014 Young Farmers Conference
Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, Pocantico Hills, NY

7th Annual Young Farmers Conference, providing participants with access to inspiring keynotes and unique workshops that address soil science, technical skills, agricultural policy, farm business management, conservation and more. For more info: (914) 366-6200, email: info@stonebarnscenter.org, website: www.stonebarnscenter.org/articles/young-farmers-conference.html

December 4-6, 2014

2014 Acres U.S.A. Conference & Trade Show:
The Conference on Ecological Farming
Hyatt Regency Hotel, Columbus, Ohio

The Acres USA Conference is where you find farmers and consultants from every side of eco-farming who come together to share their experience and expertise. Attend the non-stop event, learn the latest in cutting-edge technology and methods, and return home ready to make your farming operation the best it can be. For more info: www.acresusa.com/events/2014conference-overview email: info@acresusa.com, phone: 800-355-5313.

December 8, 2014

Women Farmers: Heroes of Our Communities
Penn State Conference Center, State College, PA

The one-day symposium features a full day of workshops, networking, and peer-to-peer information sharing. Details and registration at <http://agsci.psu.edu/wagn/events/2014-12-08onedaynetworkingsymposium>. Contact Ann Stone, Phone: 814-863-4489.

January 9-10, 2015

Minnesota Organic Conference
St. Cloud, MN

Keynote Speakers Ken Cook, Environmental Working Group Co-Founder and President, and David Montgomery, Geomorphologist and author of the award-winning book *Dirt: The Erosion of Civilization*. Pre-conference workshops on January 8th. For more info: www.mda.state.mn.us/food/organic/conference.aspx, phone: (651) 201-6012.

January 10, 2015

NOFA Mass Winter Conference & All-Day Seminar with Greg Judy: Using Livestock to Build a Healthy, Profitable Farm
Worcester State University, Worcester, MA

In this seminar, Greg Judy will discuss setting up a profitable, managed grazing operation from scratch. He will cover each step, including grazing methods, fencing, water, monitoring animal performance, recovery periods, building a litter bank, calving, winter stockpiling, developing your grazier's eye, drought management, and daily monitoring. This all-day seminar runs concurrently with the Winter Conference workshop schedule. Registration opens October 15th.

For more information, visit www.nofamass.org/winterconference.

January 16 & 17, 2015

VT Grazing and Livestock Conference
Lake Morey Inn, Fairlee, VT

For more info: www.uvm.edu/~pasture/?Page=conference.html, or contact: Jenn Colby, Pasture Program Coordinator, (802) 656-0858

January 23-25, 2015

NOFA-NY Annual Conference: 'Soil: The Root of the Movement'
Saratoga Hilton and City Center, Saratoga Springs, NY

Friday Keynote: Wes Jackson, President of The Land Institute, and Farmers of the Year Keynotes Klaas and Mary-Howell Martens, Lakeview Organic Grain. For more info: www.nofany.org/events/winter-conference, Phone: (585) 271-1979.

January 24-25, 2015

25th Annual Food & Agriculture Winter Conference
Brookdale Community College, Lincroft, NJ

Keynote Speaker, March "Coach" Smallwood, Executive Director of Rodale Institute and Pre-Conference Speakers, Jerry Brunetti (Agri-Dynamics) and Sally Fallon Morell (Weston A Price Foundation). For more information: www.nofanj.org/winterconference.htm, Phone: (908) 371-1111.

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Field Days Summary

continued from page 20

need to publish regulations. Unfortunately, the timeline for having any regulation in place looks to be sometime in 2015.

Some of the ideas coming out of the NODPA Field Days, during both the producer meeting and the NODPA Board Meeting held prior to the start of Field Days, have been implemented in this edition of NODPA News and we are committed to honoring those ideas and requests from producers. There was some discussion about the future of Field Days and whether it is still a relevant resource to producers and their families, and is touring to different states making it too difficult for producers to attend. Also, should the time of year be changed to a time when it's easier for producers to attend (during the winter, for example), which might mean sacrificing the farm tour? These are all issues we are looking for feedback on from producers. The 2014 Field Days had great presenters with national reputations that gave freely of their time and knowledge to attend and educate producers and their service providers. We thank them and our sponsors for their support and generosity. The eclectic mixture of attendees at Field Days emphasized the breadth of the organic community and the interdependency of all stakeholders if organic dairy is going to support its family farmers at a reasonable income level. The NODPA Field Days bring together the different stakeholders in a unique setting, especially this year at Stonewall Farm, amidst great New England fall weather.



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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

NOSB Opening Address

continued from page 13

self-interest, behave contrary to the best long term interests of the whole group and thus deplete the common resource, such as soil or water. And in this case we may lose our market niche in organic food production

It is not realistic to demand that there be absolutely no synthetics in anything with the organic seal and it is not realistic to ask for every synthetic or every tool in the tool box – and the NOP must work more collaboratively with the NOSB in all aspects of our work. We all have our roles to play.

Together we have to move towards the common ground.

So we must be as proactive as possible as a COMMUNITY, working with all the changes, be sure we are asking the right questions and always think in an interdisciplinary manner with systems thinking.

Let's seek common ground together.

Dr. Richardson is very approachable and welcomes any comments or questions. To reach Jean Richardson, you can email her at: jeanrichardson43@comcast.net.

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2015 Ad rates and sizes listed below.

Deadline for advertising in the
January, 2015 issue is December 15, 2014.

Full Page Ad (7.5" W x 10.25" H) = \$600

1/2 Page Ad (7.5" W x 4.5" H) = \$305

1/4 Page Ad (3.5" W x 4.75" H) = \$168

1/8 Page Ad/Business Card:
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Commit to a full year of print advertising and get last year's rates: Full: \$575, Half: \$290, Quarter: \$160, Eighth: \$85.

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 Nora Owens:
413-772-0444 or email noraowens@comcast.net.

Please send a check with your ad (made payable to NODPA).
341 Macintosh Hill Road | Randolph, VT 05060

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

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_____ \$150 to become a Business Member

Name: _____

Farm Name: _____

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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 207-465-6927 or steve.getz@organicvalley.coop.
- In New York, contact David Hardy at (608) 479-1200 or david.hardy@organicvalley.coop.
- In the Southeast, contact Gerry Cohn at (919) 605-5619 or gerry.cohn@organicvalley.coop.
- Central to Western PA, contact Solomon Meyer at (814) 515-6827 or solomon.meyer@organicvalley.coop.
- In Southeast Pennsylvania and Maryland, contact Terry Ingram at (717) 413-3765 or terry.ingram@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.

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

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.

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!

Stonyfield Farm, Inc.

Stonyfield Farm, Inc is looking for producers to support their comprehensive line of organic yogurt and diversified portfolio of organic dairy products. We offer a stable price platform with competitive premiums for components, quality and volume. In addition, we offer a comprehensive technical assistance program designed with producers to help them achieve their unique business goals. We are actively seeking producers looking to grow their business today and for the future.

Please contact our Farmer Relationship Manager, Kyle Thygesen for further details at kthygesen@stonyfield.com or (802) 369-0267.

To be listed, free, in future Organic Milk Sought columns, contact Nora Owens at 413-772-0444, noraowens@comcast.net.

NE FARM TOUR

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cattle were grazing on the land owned by the CSA. Always chuckling at connections, I texted Byron to say I was in the van with a bunch of Danes, including Leif and his daughter. His reply left me gob-smacked: Byron was in Maine and would be traveling through New York the latter part of the week. Did I know the Van Amburgh family 'cause he'd like to stop there on his way through.....

With that background in mind, one can only imagine what was running through folks' heads and hearts when we arrived for the last farm visit of this very full and amazing week.

After hugs and catch-up and treats at the picnic table overlooking a view that is not going to get old any time soon, Paul and Phyllis talked about their work with Holistic Management. We headed for the pastures, where they translated the conceptual words about recovery and biological monitoring and such into reality as we looked at the land. We moved a group of cattle, were awed at the condition of the calves and the ability of those mommas to raise such beasts, and also found out more about their Madre Method of raising calves. This was of particular interest to Thorkild, since he'd been exploring that at home.

The next task at hand was to deliver the crew to Brooklyn for their flight out, we took advantage of the daylight and peace at Dharma Lea to unpack and sort out the week and repack the van, so we'd have everything in order for the drop off in the city.

Once again... on the road again. This trip was quiet and noisy at the same time. How do you get it all conveyed before we arrive? What

do we need to do next? Do we have the lists of information that need to be exchanged, the follow-up to all those conversations that we'd just begun? What's next?

And then, with a whisper and a sigh - and hugs and laughter - we were done. Life changing.

And Maggie and I climbed into the van and headed west. On the road again.

* Funding for this educational and information-gathering trip was provided through a check-off funded program to which Danish farmers contribute. The funds are not assigned to organic or non organic farmers, but are shared throughout the agricultural sector and farmers submit applications for their disbursement. To learn more about Okologi, go here: www.okologi.dk.

Susan Beal comes from a long background of holistic veterinary practice and is dedicated to providing holistic care for animals and the environment. She also provided educational programs, consulting and coaching for her clients as well as farmers, producers and consumer groups. 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. Susan is involved with providing information and education in Holistic Management, a whole farm/business planning process that considers the triple bottom line of relevant economic, environmental and social considerations simultaneously. Email: alchemy@penn.com, phone: 814 952 6821, Laughing Oak Farm, Big Run, PA.

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**

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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CALENDAR

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January 31, 2015

**13th Annual NOFA-NH Winter Conference
Rundlett Middle School, Concord, NH**

Jam-packed with workshops, farmer intensive programs, a keynote presentation, networking and community-building opportunities, a robust Green Market Fair, and excellent organic and local meal options. For more info: Jen Skibba, (603) 224-5022, jen@nofanh.org

February 3 - 22, 2015

**2015 Carbon Farming Course: Workshops in Regenerative
Agriculture
Taconic Retreat & Conference Center, Red Hook, NY**

Trainers in the series include: Greg Judy, Abe Collins, Eric Toensmeier, Dr. Elaine Ingham, Dan Kittredge, Dale Hendricks, Mark Shepard and

more. Sign up for individual workshops or get a discount for coming to the whole event. www.CarbonFarmingCourse.com

February 14 & 15, 2015

**33rd Annual NOFA Vermont Winter Conference
University of Vermont, Burlington, VT**

For more information: www.nofavt.org/annual-events/winter-conference, Phone: 802-434-4122.

February 26-28, 2015

**MOSES Organic Farming Conference
Lacrosse, WI**

This event draws more than 3,000 farmers, advocates, educators, students, and others for educational workshops, inspiring keynote speakers, and a two-floor Exhibit Hall open exclusively to conference attendees. Organic University, 10 pre-conference courses that provide an extended learning opportunity, takes place Thursday before the conference opens in the evening. For more info: www.mosesorganic.org/conference, Phone: (715) 778-5775.
