

# NODPA News

## Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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Matthew and Rebekah Fendry with family and at work.

## Sunny Morning Holsteins, Strum, WI

By Sonja Heyck-Merlin,  
NODPA Contributing Writer

“We had an auction on Friday; got rid of the last cows on Saturday; moved all of our stuff on Sunday; signed papers at noon on Monday; and milked on Monday evening,” laughed Matt and Beka Fendry, first-generation Organic Valley dairy producers of Strum, Wisconsin, on moving their lives to their newly purchased farm in 2009. The farm, located about 15 miles south of Eau Claire in the rolling, hilly terrain of

the Driftless Region which takes its name from having escaped glaciations in the last glacial period. Matt grew up in southeast Minnesota and showed an affinity for agriculture as a toddler on his family’s small farm. By high school age, he was growing market vegetables, tending 500 laying hens and a herd of beef cattle, and working part-time on a few dairies. It is there that he found his niche. “Once I started milking cows I dropped everything else. At 19, when I graduated high school, my parents helped me build a

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## Remembering Richard and Robert Arnold Twin Oaks Dairy, Truxton, NY

Compilation and editing  
by Kathie Arnold

Brothers Robert (Bob) and Richard (Rick) Arnold, 30 year partners in Twin Oaks Dairy LLC in Truxton, NY, passed away earlier this year, both after years of formidable and courageous battles with frontotemporal degeneration (FTD). Bob, 69, passed away on January 18th, and Rick, 60, on April 11, both at their homes with family nearby. They farmed in partnership with Rick’s wife, Kathie, from January, 1st, 1980

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Bob & Rick Arnold

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### From the NODPA President

I'm pretty sure that the soft breeze we have felt lately is the farmers' collective sigh of relief as herds move out to full pasture. Sunshine and grass make everyone feel better. By the time this newsletter reaches your kitchen table, spring field work will be in full swing. We feel the excitement in the chance to start another growing season. It feels a little daunting too, as we look at the work ahead. But we are all optimists – this year will always be better! One of my neighbors is a little more reserved; he is just praying for a normal year. After the weather and crops of the last couple years, "normal" sounds good.

In this issue, Ed Maltby will examine the proposed rule for Origin of Livestock. The full rule is available for public inspection on the NOP's website, and comments may be made until July 27, 2015.

And Nora Owens announces the NODPA Field Days will be held on October 1 and 2, 2015 at the farm of Paul and Dana Tillotson in Pavilion, New York. This year's theme centers on farming for the next

generation.

Also in this issue, we pause to remember Rick Arnold who passed away last month after a long battle with Frontotemporal Degeneration. Rick's wife, Kathie, shares with us some of his life and legacy. Kathie is a past president of NODPA, and our hearts go out to Kathie, Kirk, and Carly during this time.

**Liz Bawden, NODPA President**

**Hammond, NY | Phone: 315-324-6926**

### 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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**Arden Landis, State Rep**  
1850 Bowmansville Rd.  
Mohnton, PA 19540-9427  
c2graze@dejazzd.com  
Phone: 717-484-0038

##### Dave Johnson, Vice President

1254 Black Creek Rd, Liberty, PA 16930  
provident@epix.net  
Phone: 570-324-2285

##### Roman Stoltzfus, State Rep

Spring Wood Organic Farm  
1143 Gap Rd, Kinzers, PA, 17535  
romans@epix.net  
Phone: 610-593-2415

##### VIRGINIA

##### Rodney Martin, State Rep

Bridge View Dairy  
2773 Fadley Road  
bridgewater, VA 22812-2711  
rodney@lancasterag.com  
Cell: 540-705-7834

##### NEW YORK

##### Liz Bawden, President, Newsletter Contributor, Associate Editor

119 Factory Rd., Hammond, NY 13646  
bawden@cit-tele.com  
Phone: 315-324-6926

##### Siobhan Griffin, State Rep

2518 Co. Hwy 35, Schnevus, NY 12155  
raindance@baka.com  
Phone: 607-286-9362

##### Steve Kimball, Board Member

Kimvale Farm  
3456 Dry Brook Rd, Falconer, NY 14733  
716-267-9272  
steve@kimvale.com

##### Robert Moore, State Rep

Moore Farms, 2083 Moore Hill Rd.  
Nichols, NY 13812  
Phone: 607-699-7968  
cowpoke2@verizon.net

##### Bill Stine, State Rep

45540 Stine Road  
Redwood, NY 13679-3160  
Phone: (315) 482-2017  
tstine2007@yahoo.com

##### John Stoltzfus, State Rep

1553 Hesselton Gully Rd.  
Whitesville, NY 14897  
jsttribe@yahoo.com  
Phone: 607-356-3272

##### George Wright, Treasurer

821 Pyrites-Russell Rd.  
Hermon, NY 14897  
wrightdairy@yahoo.com  
Phone: 315-347-4604

##### VERMONT

##### Craig Russell, Board Member

Brotherly Farm LLC, 570 Lavender Road  
Brookfield, VT 05036  
brotherlyfarm@yahoo.com  
Phone: 802-272-7726  
http://www.brotherlyfarm.com

##### Jeep Madison, State Rep

2806 Smith Street, Shoreham, VT 05770  
Cell: 802-349-6262  
email: jojoselixir@yahoo.com

##### Brian Wilson, State Rep

Morningside Farm, 101 Hemenway Hill Rd, Shoreham, VT 05770  
Cell phone: 802-377-1786,  
email: bpwilson@shoreham.net

##### Bonnie and Tom Boutin, State Rep

1184 Cross Road,  
Newport Ctr, VT 05857  
Phone: 802-334-2081  
bonnieboutin@yahoo.com

##### CONNECTICUT

##### Rick Segalla, Board Member

96 Allyndale Rd.  
Canaan, CT 06018  
mccow@earthlink.net  
Phone: 860-824-0241

##### MASSACHUSETTS

##### Morvan Allen, Board Member

Maple Shade Farm Inc.  
229 Hewins St, Sheffield, MA 01257  
morvenallen@live.com  
Phone: 413-229-6018

##### NEW HAMPSHIRE

##### Cindy-Lou Amey, State Rep

Indian Stream Farm  
81 Tabor Road, Pittsburg, NH 03592  
Phone: (603) 538-7734  
cindyloamey@gmail.com

##### MAINE

##### Steven Russell, Board Member

RR2 Box 5660, Winslow, ME 04901  
jwinrussel@roadrunner.com  
Phone: 207-872-6533

##### Steve Morrison, Secretary

Policy Committee Chair  
159 Atkinson Rd, Charleston, ME 04422  
smorrison@midmaine.com  
Phone: 207-285-7085 Fax: 207-285-0128

##### Aaron Bell, State Rep

Tide Mill Organic Farm  
91 Tide Mill Road, Edmunds, Maine 04628  
Phone: 207-733-2551  
eatlocal@tidemillorganicfarm.com  
www.tidemillorganicfarm.com

##### AT LARGE NODPA BOARD MEMBERS

##### Ed Zimba, MODPA Board Member

Zimba Dairy, 7995 Mushroom Rd  
DeFord, MI 48729  
zimbadairy@tband.net  
Phone & Fax: 989-872-2680

##### Darlene Coehoorn, MODPA President,

Newsletter Contributor  
Viewpoint Acres Farm  
N5878 Hwy C, Rosendale, WI 54874  
ddviewpoint@yahoo.com  
Phone: 920-921-5541

##### Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer

3253 150th Ave. Glenwood City, WI 54013  
bdrinkman@hotmail.com  
Phone: 715-265-4631

##### Andrew Dykstra, WODPA President

ASDYKSTRA@aol.com

##### Henry Perkins, Past President,

Box 156 Bog Rd., Albion, ME 04910  
Phone: 207-437-9279  
bullridge@uninet.net

##### Kathie Arnold, Policy Committee

3175 NYS Rt. 13, Truxton, NY 13158  
kathiearnold@gmail.com  
Phone: 607-842-6631  
Fax: 607-842-6557

#### NODPA STAFF

##### Ed Maltby, Executive Director

30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342  
ednodpa@comcast.net  
Phone: 413-772-0444 Fax: 866-554-9483

##### Nora Owens, Editor &

##### Event Coordinator

30 Keets Rd., Deerfield, MA 01342  
noraowens@comcast.net  
Phone: 413-772-0444  
Fax: 866-554-9483

##### Webmaster / Newsletter Layout

Chris Hill, Chris Hill Media  
368 West Duval St., Phila., PA 19144  
Phone: 215-843-5704  
chris@chrishillmedia.com

##### NODPA Contributing Writer

Sonja Heyck-Merlin  
Clovercrest Farm, 159 Atkinson Road  
Charleston, ME 04422  
207-285-7085, sjheyckme@gmail.com

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## From the NODPA Desk: May 2015

*By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director*

The supply of organic milk is short, very short. This is no surprise to producers who have been telling their processors for many years that the pay price is too low to encourage production and expansion. While we value the lifestyle, the satisfaction of having good soil, healthy livestock and a safe workplace, the success of our businesses cannot be dependent on the sweat equity of family members; we must also be financial successful. If we are to have more organic milk we need to make the necessary capital and personal investments. We will need more organic cows (capital investment), that will need more organically certified pasture that can return a profit per acre equal to other uses (capital investment), which means more land transitioned to organic. This takes both a personal and financial commitment since it takes three years, a commitment to learning different production practices, and to maintaining comprehensive records (capital and lifestyle investment). It also needs more producers who are educated in organic production methods and herd health.

In order to finance this necessary capital investment, we need educated lenders. Lenders aren't looking at the environmental and health benefits of organic production or the strong, expanding market for organic milk, they are looking at return of investment, cash flow, EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization) and debt service coverage. It is difficult to show lenders that the strong market for organic dairy products supports the producers, because there is little or no evidence that it does.

If we are serious about attracting more producers to organic dairy production we need to address the inequities of the current pay price system. Currently, organic dairy has no Federal Milk Marketing Orders or Margin Protection Program and no formal negotiating structure that provides some procedure for deciding pay price and a form of price guarantee. Organic dairy producers receive a lower percentage of the retail dollar than conventional producers do. History shows how slow processors are to respond to increases in production costs and how reluctant they are to have a reasonable base price, preferring to load up on seasonal and other incentives. Organic dairy is now mature enough to have both independent research and anecdotal information from production across the country to be able to assess what pay price is required to maintain a healthy farm base. In the Northeast, we know that a base price needs to be in the high \$30 and low \$40

per hundredweight to attract and retain a high level of organic production. We also know how an increase in the cost of inputs will affect the supply of milk.

To all outward appearances, sales of organic products are increasing at a steady rate, with organic dairy having a year-over-year growth of between seven to nine percent. This growth is based on consumer demand for a product, but where are we turning to find that supply to meet the demand for more organic dairy products? The world market. Why the world market? Because it is cheaper to ship organic dairy and meat product from Australasia to meet the demands of manufacturing, and processors that are constantly trying to lower their costs.

We are now at a significant point in the integrity and nature of organic certification. The NOP says they are powerless to place a moratorium on the certification of soilless growing plant production and has set up another taskforce to re-examine this production practice, which is approved by some certifiers but not by the majority of them. Soilless production is the antithesis of certified organic production. Furthermore, GMO contamination is affecting every level of organic production but there is still no responsibility assigned to the patent holder for the contamination, yet the responsibility is still focused on the producer who must spend money to prevent contamination. The trade group for the organic industry, OTA, is promoting a check-off program to increase sales of organic product which, increasingly, will have to be based on imported organic crops which are cheaper and more easily available. The newly released Origin of Livestock Rule allows the growth of organic dairy to be based on milking cows that are only under organic production for one year since the regulation allows producers to take exemptions on certification standards many times over, by forming new business entities.

When you look at who controls organic, at how many organic regulations are geared to lower standards to encourage growth, at the allotment of risk and responsibility for certification failures to producers, even those outside their control, at the increasing trend of processors to buy products based on the lowest cost rather than country of origin, and at not increasing organic production in the USA, then one should not be surprised there is no growth in the acres under organic production. When you throw in the capital cost of transition within a market that offers only limited incentives to transition, the reasons why producers do not see the growth in organic sales as a great opportunity are easy to understand. Raise the pay price; safeguard the integrity of organic; and exhibit actions that show the long term strength of organic dairy, livestock and crops as a production practice that will return profit commensurate with inputs and return on equity – problem solved and more acres and livestock under organically certified production. ♦



## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

# Tips for a Good Grazing Season

By Hubert J. Karreman, VMD







**S**pring finally managed to make it this year! We enjoy putting the cows out on the lush native pastures without a worry. Yet as we all know, just because the cows are on pasture doesn't mean that everything will be smooth sailing. Yes, cows on well-managed pasture systems make milk effortlessly, but we still need to keep some basic cautions in mind.

Let's look at feed since it is pasture that they're eating.



We need to keep in mind both pasture quality and quantity. Obviously feed quality is excellent with spring pasture, with lots of protein, vitamins and minerals in the fresh growing pasture.

Yet too much of a good thing, even pasture, can sometimes have negative effects. How so? First and foremost is that the protein taken in from pasture is very digestible. This means it releases lots of soluble protein within the rumen. This soluble protein creates excess nitrogen and the nitrogen escapes through the rumen walls into the cow's general circulation. The liver then must metabolize the excess nitrogen in the blood coming to it (detoxifies it), making in turn blood urea nitrogen. This can then pass into the milk, which can be measured as milk urea nitrogen (MUN). Normal MUN levels should be between 8-12. The process of detoxification by the liver takes biological energy, which, if not replaced by smart feeding, drains down the cow and she will become skinny. She also becomes skinny because of the relatively low fiber content of lush pasture, which means the pasture moves very fast through the cow (low retention time) which results in very loose manure. High MUN can also change the pH of the uterine environment, potentially hindering conception.

How can we reduce this large input of soluble nitrogen from lush green pastures? If at all possible, put cows into pasture at the height when you would cut hay – when clover is about 7-8",

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alfalfa is 10-14" and orchard and other grasses are 12-18". Why? First and foremost, there will be better structural fiber content in the pasture. This means slightly slower movement through the cow (less runny manure) as well as a higher energy content of the pasture relative to its protein content. We can slow down movement of pasture through a cow by feeding dry hay - but cows may refuse hay when they are grazing. However, if you can soak bales of hay with molasses this may prompt them to eat it for needed effective fiber. Using molasses will provide sweetness and some much needed energy to the rumen to balance out the massive amount of protein coming in from pasture. Just as you need the right carbon (carbohydrate) to nitrogen (protein) balance in the soil, you need to do the same for the rumen. You can see the amount of structural (effective) fiber in a cow's diet by how many times she chews each cud - it should be about 60 chews per cud and definitely no less than 50 chews per cud. Additionally, I've analyzed many direct pasture clippings and the highest brix levels of plant sap (crude measure of sugar content) are from pastures which are nearly ready to make hay (generally the height already mentioned). Admittedly, it is hard to hold cows off pasture when green pasture is there and winter feed inventory is nearly gone.

Now let's consider pasture quantity. Depending on location and time of season, there may be ample pasture or they may be very limited pasture. Both situations can be challenging in terms of management. Why? Because the total body weight of the animals

needs to be in balance with the density of pasture in order to keep both cows and pasture healthy and producing long term. If we leave the cows on the same area too long or we have too many animals for the density of pasture available, milk production can suffer and pasture vigor will decline. From field studies I've done, it takes roughly 1/4 acre per 12 hours of well managed native pasture to deliver 30% dry matter intake for 40 organic Holsteins, while it takes only 1/8 acre of sorghum sudan grass is needed per 12 hours. While this comes from southeastern PA, I'm certain that well-managed pasture in other areas of the northeast can deliver the same. I am not advocating grazing as little pasture as possible to remain organic; I just want to show that it doesn't take much to meet the legal requirement. But how do we know when a cow has enough feed? By looking at her rumen and seeing if it is full or not - it is that easy. If you see an upside down triangular indentation ("danger triangle") on the left side of the cow, she hasn't eaten enough in the last 6-12 hours. Even worse is if there is a deep rectangular indentation on the left side.

A real potential hazard to grazing lush pasture is bloat. Pasture bloat can occur when animals have been on dense legume paddocks (i.e. clover) for a few days in a row with little to no other feed intake. By day 3-5 of being on the same legume-rich field, some will clearly bloat, with both sides of their abdomen becoming very distended and a noticeable bulge on the left side. What

*continued on page 6*

**Proper dry cow management is one of the keys to a successful dairy.**


A good dry cow program is an essential element in building a successful dairy business. Along with sound management and nutrition programs, products that help support a healthy immune function can lead to healthier, more productive animals. Areas of improvement might be thriftier calves, lower SCC, higher milk peak and production and fewer overall herd health issues.

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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

### Good Grazing

*continued from page 5*

is happening is that zillions of tiny bubbles are being generated in the rumen environment. The best way to prevent this is by feeding dry hay to the cows about ½ hour prior to putting out on pasture. Again, if need be, put molasses on the hay so they eat it.

If you happen to notice the cows looking slightly larger after a couple days of being on clover fields, simply put them on a grassy field to stop the bloating early.

If you have actual bloat happening, give olive oil to the cow – carefully give 1 pint (never hold the nose to the sky as fluids can easily get in the windpipe). Then walk the cow(s) around for 15 minutes and then give another pint. This works about 95-99% of the time. If there is severe bloat (obvious discomfort), stab a short knife into the left side at the highest part of the bloat. Once jabbed in, turn the knife 90 degrees to allow the volcano of bubbles to escape.

Walking to the pasture can actually be hazardous to a cow's health, depending on the condition of lane ways. Cows can quickly and confidently get to paddocks on well constructed laneways. Good laneways shed water away from the center to the sides so muddy areas are minimal. Laneways are also free from sharp stones. Stones are probably the worst factor in terms of creating lameness and mud is the worst for creating high somatic cell count. Nor-

mal walking cows which aren't lame will have very straight backs as they walk. Any curve to a cow's back should be a tip off that there is pain happening, either with every step of a certain limb or possibly internally in the belly. A cow's legs should be clean, and scoring of clean versus dirty legs is something that can be done on a periodic basis. Any mud/dirt should be minimal and limited to the hoof area to just above the dew claws at the most. As the cows' environment deteriorates (either laneways or in bedded areas) more and more dirt will accumulate higher and higher on the legs which will of course include the udder at some point.

Last to discuss - but definitely not least important - is access to fresh, plentiful water. At meetings there are many lively discussions about how best to provide water to grazing cows. Many herds have portable 50 - 100 gallon water tubs in paddocks attached to quick coupler devices coming off long water lines. Some herds only get water when they come back to the barn while other herds may be drinking out of small streams. Recall that milk is roughly 88% water. The more water the cows drink, the more likely there will be higher milk production. Or perhaps the opposite is even truer: the less water they drink the lower the milk production will be.

Let's hope for a good, long pasture season this year so that the past winter will quickly fade into history. These tips are meant for you to ponder as you walk your cows out to pasture. Smart and happy grazing to all! ♦

*Hubert Karreman is a veterinarian for the Rodale Institute in Kutztown, PA and owner of CowMaster, LLC (formerly Bovinity-Health, LLC), and can be reached at 717-405-8137.*



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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Free Speech and Prohibited Messaging

*The Limits to Promotional Activities for Federal Check-off Money*

*Posted on NoOrganicCheckOff.com*

The suggestion that organic check-off funds will be used to promote organics is one of the biggest arguments the Organic Trade Association (OTA) is using in their attempt to convince the organic community that their check-off proposal is a good idea.

However, as experience with other commodity check-off programs has demonstrated, there are severe restrictions and requirements attached to any promotional messages. These include prohibitions on:

- Promotions that disparage another agricultural commodity.
- Any action that would be a conflict of interest.
- Promotions which are not generic.
- Using funds to influence governmental action or policy – NOSB or NOP.

So what does this mean? For one thing, the USDA's Secretary of Agriculture has final approval authority over every word in every

promotional campaign.

And why is this? Says former USDA official Richard Mathews, "The Supreme Court has ruled that check-offs fund the Government's own speech because the message is effectively controlled by the Federal Government. Thus, all messaging will be held to the standard, 'Would the Secretary of Agriculture say this?'" Mathews spent more than eleven years providing oversight to similar check-off programs for other food commodities.

Adds Mathews: "Keep in mind that the Secretary will say nothing that favors one sector or commodity over another."

Check-off programs are restricted in others ways on how money can be spent. Their budget has to be approved by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). The Board that would govern the organic check-off is appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. The USDA's AMS employees are present and take an active part in all funding decisions.

Check-off funds can only be used to promote a commodity, not to show one (e.g., organically certified product) is better than another. This means that:

- Check-off funds cannot be used to differentiate the claims of "natural" from "organically certified" as that disparages other forms of production.
- Check-off funds cannot be used to say organically certified products are free of herbicides, pesticides, and GMO's

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## National Organic Standards Board Update

Jean Richardson, Chair National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)

In May, by the time you read this article, the April NOSB Meeting in California will be over and the Origin of Live-stock rule will have been published - any day now I am told. At the NOSB meeting in late April we will be voting on two petitioned substances of interest to dairy producers: Acidified Sodium Chlorite for use as a pre- and post-teat dip treatment (205.603 (a)) to provide an alternative to iodine based teat dips, and Zinc Sulfate for use as a footbath only (205.603(b)).

Proposed rules to implement the NOSB Animal Welfare recommendations are under development, and this week Secretary Vilsack stated in public that these will be starting departmental clearance this summer. This seems to be a clear signal of the Secretary's support for this rule. A proposed organic animal welfare rule could be published later this year, and this would be an ideal time for you to review the document and voice your opinion.

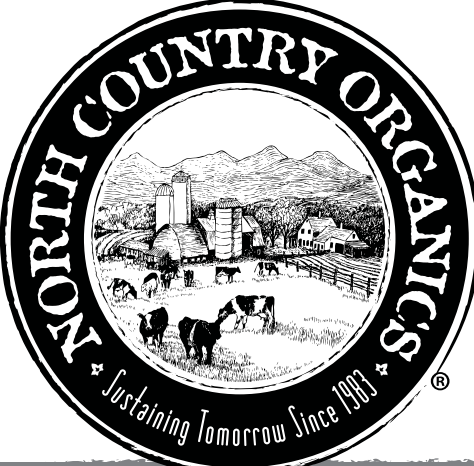

So, today I will talk a bit about what substances on the National List will be coming up for Sunset vote at the October meeting,

Dr. Jean Richardson



and the kind of input that the NOSB would like to hear from NODPA members this summer.

If you have been following the Sunset Review changes at all you will know that now all substances stay on the National List unless the full NOSB (with a two thirds majority) recommends

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removing the substance from the National List. Previously, all substances went off the National List unless the NOSB voted to add them back during the Five Year Review process. Thus you will see that in order to be sure that all substances under Five Year Review are reviewed by the FULL Board for vote at public meeting, after public comment at two public meetings, every material is brought forward from the respective subcommittee on a Motion to Remove. This also ensures that the organic community is on public notice that every Sunset material could potentially be removed. So, please pay attention and let us know how essential a particular substance is to your production.

When you are researching a particular substance you will see Motions to Remove and subcommittee votes and comments or questions during the initial public comment period, and more detailed notes for the second public meeting period and the second posting. This may seem a bit cumbersome, but it seems to be working well, and certainly we are getting plenty of public comment on substances much earlier in the Review process, rather than a scramble at the end, or right before vote.

In terms of numbers to be voted on at the October meeting in Vermont: Livestock will be presenting 42 substances for Sunset 2017 Review; Crops 43; and Handling 79. There will be substances of interest to NODPA members in all of these subcommittees.

The NOSB has done an enormous amount of research on all these substances and each of us is presently going through more than a thousand written public comments and awaiting further oral comment at the April meeting. The NOSB asked NOP for many Technical Reports in the last twelve months, and the NOP ensured that the money was available for these Technical Reports and they have been really helpful to us in this complex analysis. Each subcommittee is trying to analyze all this information and data to determine how likely or not that the NOSB will actually vote to remove a specific substance. These decisions are based on the 7 criteria in the Organic Food Production Act (OFPA). So if a substance is necessary to your operation it is really important to let the NOSB know, by sending in public comment.

Based on public comment submitted so far, it does not appear

*continued on page 10*

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### NOSB Update

*continued from page 9*

that any of the livestock materials will be recommended for removal from the List in October, with the exception of one or two parasiticides.

#### Parasiticides:

There are 3 parasiticides up for Sunset Review to be voted on in October:

#### *Fenbenzadole, Ivermectin and Moxidectin*

There is research which indicates that Ivermectin, a broad spectrum parasiticide, is toxic to dung beetles which are an integral part of pastureland ecology. Moxidectin is less toxic in pastures than Ivermectin, but somewhat worse for fish if it gets into water. In addition, both Ivermectin and Moxidectin are macrocyclic lactones, a type of antibiotic, and antibiotics are not allowed in organic agriculture. Thus it seems possible that both Moxidectin and Ivermectin may be removed from the National List in October (remember that I am not clairvoyant!).

It is reasonable to assume that Fenbenzadole will remain on the National List. However, questions have been raised over the last

few years about the Withholding period. Fenbenzadole is listed as follows:

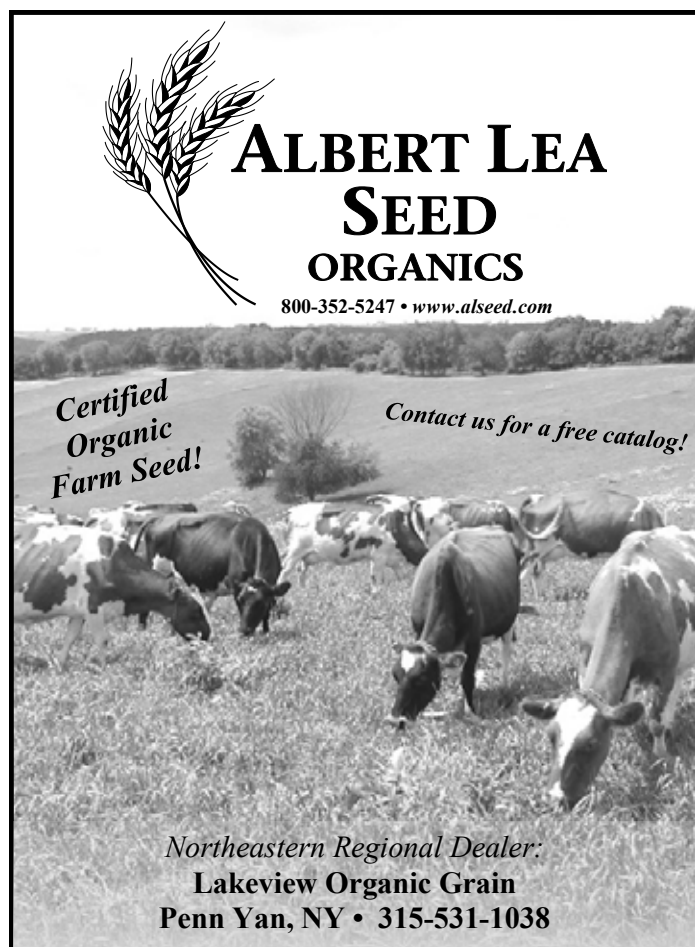
**205.603 Parasiticides** - prohibited in slaughter stock, allowed in emergency treatment for dairy and breeder stock when organic system plan-approved preventive management does not prevent infestation. Milk or milk products from a treated animal cannot be labeled as provided for in subpart D of this part for 90-days following treatment. In breeder stock, treatment cannot occur during the last third of gestation if the progeny will be sold as organic and must not be used during the lactation period for breeder stock.

**Fenbenzadole** - only for use by or on the lawful written order of a licensed veterinarian

Public comment suggests that the annotation of a 90 day withholding period was not established based on any scientific data, and should probably be reduced to 14 days.

We also have public comment suggesting that wool from sheep should be able to be sold as organic even though the meat is not able to be sold as such.

Annotations are not done at Sunset, and thus if these issues are of concern to NODPA members, a separate petition could be filed this summer. Such a petition for an annotation to Fenbenzadole could perhaps be on the October agenda as separate from the

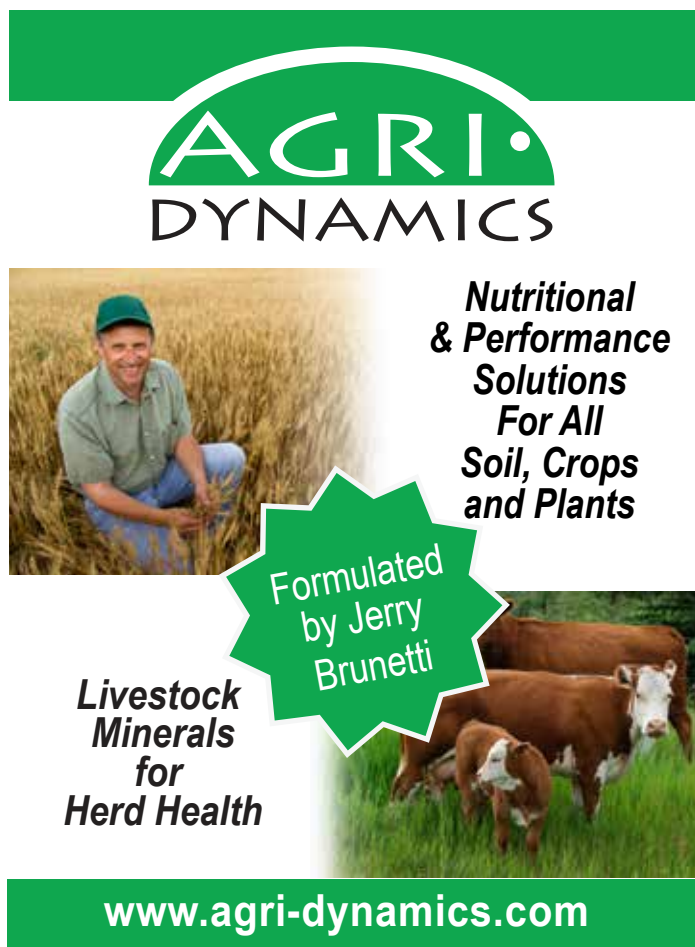


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Sunset item if it is received soon. However, petitions can take a year or more, so I can't promise we can make a recommendation this fall.

### Research Priorities:

Each subcommittee develops research priorities each summer for recommendation to the NOP in the fall. Parasite prevention and control has been suggested as a research priority. The livestock subcommittee would welcome your observations, and experience in management techniques, herbal remedies, plant species combinations in pastures or other mechanisms that you have found effective in parasite prevention and control.

I know that when I am on farm walks or doing inspections, parasite control issues are a relatively common conversation. Some suggest we should be approaching parasite control in a manner similar to the approach in the Canadian Organic Standards. What do you think?

Finally, we have received public comment regarding the use of Nonylphenyl Ethoxylates (NPE's) used in formulations of teat dips containing iodine. NPE's act as surfactants in complexing iodine. NPE's, even at very low levels, have a toxic effect on aquatic systems. Iodine (205.603(a) and (b)) comes up for Sunset Review and vote in October. There has been some suggestion that a petition may be submitted to the NOSB asking to limit use of iodine to those forms made without NPE's. However it looks as though the dairy industry has already recognized the issues related to

NPE's, and the industry is already moving fast to address this concern. One certifier has informed us that, of the 104 teat dips that they have reviewed, 94 contain NPE's. So, we would appreciate your comments on iodine.

*Well, that's all from me for today. If you have comments or questions you can contact me at home: 802-425-3733; or by e-mail: [jeanrichardson43@comcast.net](mailto:jeanrichardson43@comcast.net)*

### Apply today: Conference scholarships for humane livestock producers!

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## Organic Industry News

# Origin of Livestock – USDA NOP publishes a proposed rule for comment

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

The proposed rule was published in the Federal Register on April 28, 2015. The USDA has given plenty of time for the organic community, stakeholders, and consumers to submit written comments on the proposed rule, with comments having to be submitted by July 27, 2015.

This proposed rule does provide clarity and a single standard for the one time exemption, with specificity on what the transitioned animals and their progeny can be used for. Under this proposal, the eligibility for a one-time transition is tied to a producer, as specified on an organic certificate, and they would need to meet the definition of a dairy farm and other proposed requirements.

Using the producer as the one time exemption is a compromise that does allow for members of families to start their own organic herd and does make it easier for certifiers to verify who is able to use the exemption but shuts the door on the same entity using the one time transition numerous times with new operations/herds or allowing continuous transition or the use of heifer ranches.

It still leaves open the ability for existing producers or corporations to start an LLC, as a new entity, to use the one time transition exemption again under a different certified entity/producer. It also does allow a certified entity to transition their operation and then sell the animals as organic to an existing organic milking herd. One concern that NODPA has had in the past with using the producer rather than the “responsible connected person” as the eligibility criteria is that an LLC can easily be set up and transition a large number of dairy cows and then sell them as organic milkers to an existing organic dairy under a different named entity but with the same owners. Producers looking to take advantage of short supply in organic milk and low priced milk in the conventional market will be able to transition all the animals they want and sell them to their own or other existing organic operations by using convenient LLC’s. The need for a sufficient land base to support those animals on organic pasture rather than purchased organic feed does mitigate this risk of exploiting the organic market and harming the integrity of organic dairy.

Recordkeeping is not well defined except by reference to other parts of the rule so that may be an area where there needs more clarity in a final rule. It also raises the question about communication between different certifiers about the past history of producers, and the need for some degree of uniformity in certificates of organic certification, especially important for organically certified auctions. The fact that a transitioned animal and any progeny fed third-year transitional crops can never be sold as organic beef will need specific attention in any record-keeping and on-farm accountability.

We have waited a long time for this rule that will still take at least

*Under this proposal, the eligibility for a one-time transition is tied to a producer, as specified on an organic certificate, and they would need to meet the definition of a dairy farm and other proposed requirements.*

another year to be implemented and it will provide clarity in an area which has been very confusing and which has been interpreted very differently in different regions of the country. It is not as prescriptive as many producers wanted and does have loopholes that can be easily exploited. Consumers need to trust the integrity of the organic system and regulations, and hopefully won’t realize that it only takes one year of organic management to flush out all the antibiotics, hormones, and other nasties they don’t want. As we now have a mature organic dairy industry with a good supply of organic replacements, which we did not have when this process started fifteen years ago, do we need any exemption at all?

Below are the changes that this proposed rule is suggesting, the changes are in **BOLD**:

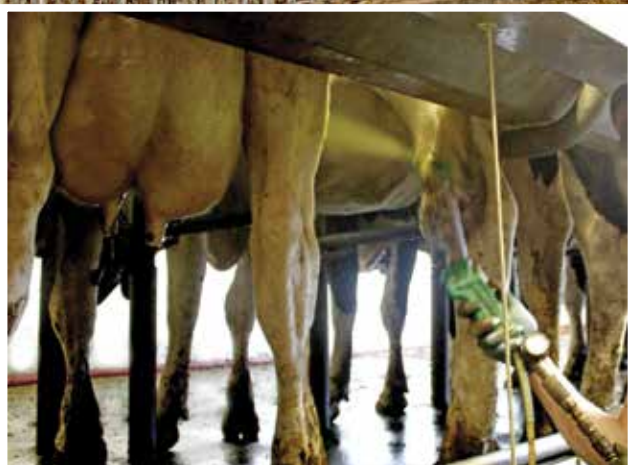
## § 205.2 Terms defined.

1. **Dairy farm.** A premises with a milking parlor where at least one lactating animal is milked.
2. **Organic management.** Management of a production or handling operation in compliance with all applicable production and handling provisions under this part.
3. **Third-year transitional crop.** Crops and forage from land, included in the organic system plan of a producer’s operation, that has had no application of prohibited substances within 2 years prior to harvest of the crop or forage.
4. **Transitional crop.** Any agricultural crop or forage from land, included in the organic system plan of a producer’s operation, that has had no application of prohibited substances within one year prior to harvest of the crop or forage.
5. **Transitioned animal.** A dairy animal that was converted to organic milk production in accordance with §205.236(a)(2); offspring borne to a transitioned animal that, during its last third of gestation, consumes third year transitional crops; or offspring borne during the one-time transition exception that themselves consume third year transitional crops. Such animals must not be sold, labeled, or represented as organic slaughter stock or for the purpose of organic fiber.

*continued on page 14*

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Origin of Livestock

continued from page 12

#### § 205.236 Origin of livestock.

a) Livestock products that are to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic must be from livestock under continuous organic management from the last third of gestation or hatching: *Except*, That:

- (1) *Poultry*. Poultry or edible poultry products must be from poultry that has been under continuous organic management beginning no later than the second day of life;
- (2) *Dairy animals*. A producer as defined in §205.2 may transition dairy animals into organic production only once. A producer is eligible for this transition only if the producer starts a new organic dairy farm or converts an existing nonorganic dairy farm to organic production. A producer must not transition any new animals into organic production after completion of this one-time transition. This transition must occur over a continuous 12-month period prior to production of milk or milk products that are to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic, and meet the following conditions:
  - i. During the 12-month period, dairy animals must be under continuous organic management;

- ii. During the 12-month period, the producer should describe the transition as part of its organic system plan and submit this as part of an application for certification to a certifying agent, as required in §205.401;
- iii. During the 12-month period, dairy animals and their offspring may consume third-year transitional crops;
- iv. Offspring born during or after the 12-month period are transitioned animals if they consume third-year transitional crops during the transition or if the mother consumes third year transitional crops during the offspring's last third of gestation;
- v. Offspring born from transitioning dairy animals are organic if they are under continuous organic management and if only certified organic crops and forages are used from their last third of gestation;
- vi. All dairy animals must end the transition at the same time;
- vii. Dairy animals that complete the transition are transitioned animals and must not be used for organic livestock products other than organic milk;
- viii. After the 12-month period ends, transitioned animals may produce organic milk on any organic dairy farm as long as the animal is under continuous organic management at all times on a certified organic operation; and

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- ix. After the 12-month period ends, any new dairy animal brought onto a producer's dairy farm(s) for organic milk production must be an animal under continuous organic management from the last third of gestation or a transitioned animal sourced from another certified organic dairy farm.
- (3) *Breeder stock.* Livestock used as breeder stock may be brought from a nonorganic operation onto an organic operation at any time, *Provided, that the following conditions are met:*
- Such breeder stock must be brought onto the operation no later than the last third of gestation if its offspring are to be raised as organic livestock; and
  - Such breeder stock must be managed organically throughout the last third of gestation and the lactation period during which time they may nurse their own offspring.
- (b) The following are prohibited:
- Livestock, **edible livestock products, or nonedible livestock products such as animal fiber** that are removed from an organic operation and subsequently managed on a non-organic operation may not be sold, labeled, or represented as organically produced.
  - Breeder stock, dairy stock, or transitioned animals that have not been under continuous organic management since the last third of gestation may not be sold, labeled, or represented as organic slaughter stock.
- (c) The producer of an organic livestock operation must maintain records sufficient to preserve the identity of all organically managed animals, **including whether they are transitioned animals**, and edible and nonedible animal products produced on the operation.
- Section 205.237 is amended by revising paragraph (a) to read as follows:*
- § 205.237 Livestock feed.**
- (a) The producer of an organic livestock operation must provide livestock with a total feed ration composed of agricultural products, including pasture and forage, that are organically produced and handled by operations certified to the NOP, except as provided in §205.236(a)(2)(iii), except, that, synthetic substances allowed under §205.603 and nonsynthetic substances not prohibited under §205.604 may be used as feed additives and feed supplements, *Provided, That*, all agricultural ingredients included in the ingredients list, for such additives and supplements, shall have been produced and handled organically.
- Section 205.239 is amended by revising paragraph (a)(3) to read as follows:*
- § 205.239 Livestock living conditions.**
- (a) (3) Appropriate clean, dry bedding. When roughages are used as bedding, they shall have been organically produced in accordance with this part by an operation certified under this part, except as provided in §205.236(a)(2)(iii), and, if applicable, organically handled by operations certified to the NOP.

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Picture: John King / Hidden Camp Farm, Canajoharie, NY

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Pay price, feed and retail price update for May 2015

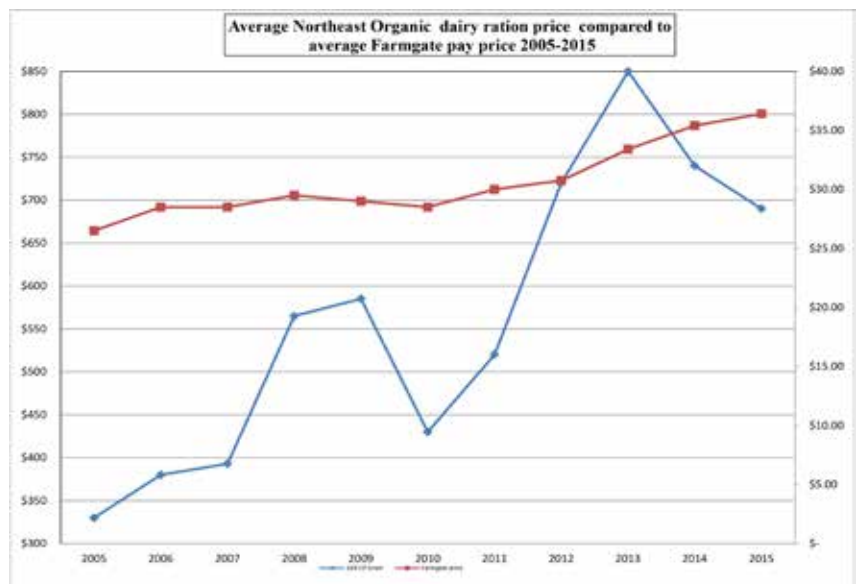
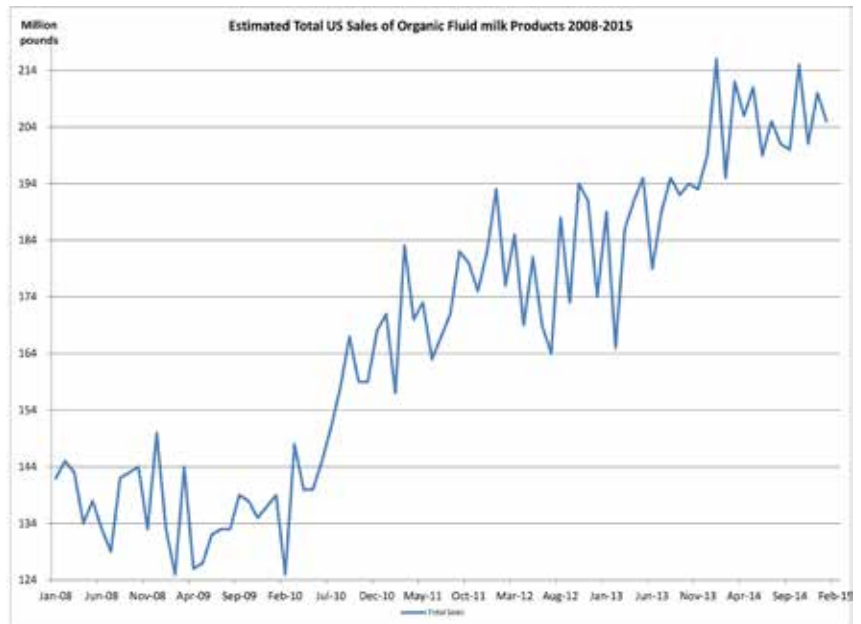
#### *Organic Milk Supply Feeding Frenzy*

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

If you are in a position to move your milk to another processor, especially if you qualify for any grass-fed programs, you will find plenty of folks out there willing to buy your milk and most will give a sign-on incentive. Producers across the country are looking to move away from the national brands and change their buyers, mostly to more regionally based processors and cooperatives. Processors are giving financial incentives for those thinking of transitioning to organic and there are reports of farms transitioning, especially in Vermont where there is active support and good business planning for those making the switch. One processor in New York is offering an incentive of \$3 per hundred pounds for the final 12 months of transition plus \$2.50 per hundred incentives for the first 3 months of organic production. Another is offering a \$38 base price on organic (not grass fed). As Organic Valley is dropping some of its store brand contracts because of a shortage in supply, they are being picked up by more regional processors who need the customers to balance their branded product. Experienced producers are stressing the need for a higher long term base price, and a base pay price of \$37 per hundred with quality and volume premiums bringing it closer to a farmgate price of \$40 per hundred with no trucking costs, are increasingly common.

The last time that we had such good demand for organic milk was when HP Hood entered the market. As a result, the pay price jumped by a few dollars, processors established unrealistic trucking routes and there was an increase in smaller independent processors. It was not sustainable and many producers suffered. While the cause for the increase in demand for organic milk this time is based more on shortage of supply caused by inadequate pay price, producers need to be cautious to ensure they are getting what they need to be profitable. Don't be misled by the processors

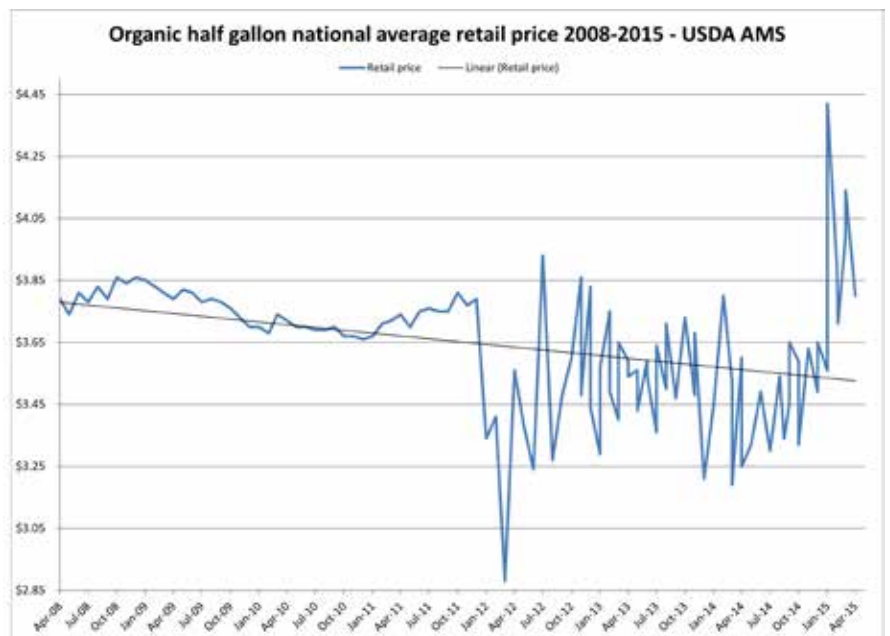
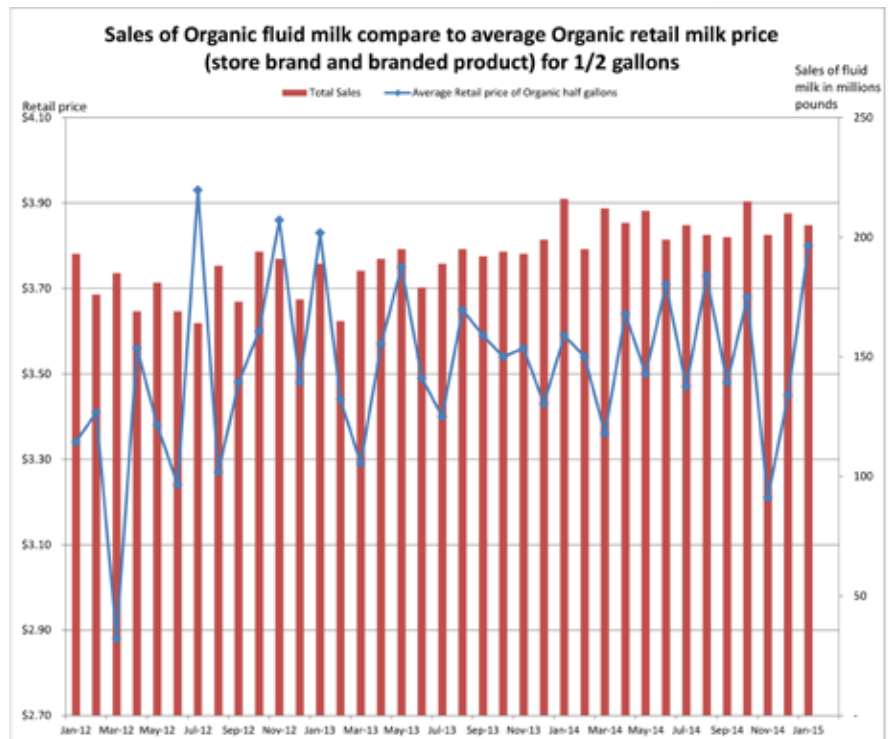
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calculating your farm gate price as every farm will have different conditions and always look for a high base price that is tied to a contract or cooperative agreement. All milk being sold to meet grass fed standards, the pay price needs to be in the middle \$40's as a starting point for most operations in order for it to "pencil out" in the long term. Some producers have had to drop out of programs because they have had trouble balancing rations and also weren't able to manage the financial ramifications of producing a lower volume of milk. For those producers that have experience with a grass-fed only approach, the increase in demand for their product is based on a rapidly expanding market in fluid milk and some processed product but it is difficult to predict where this demand will go or when it will level out. Over the last few years, organic demand has been between seven to nine percent, and consumers do not appear to stop buying if the retail price increases a little. As an indication of the strength of consumer demand, there are more imports of organic cheese and milk powder coming into the US market. The spring flush of organic milk is beginning and there are good signs that the increase in volume may ease some of the processors' supply challenges and increase the producers' bottom lines as they move away from purchased feed.

Producers also need to pay close attention to their contracts, which are the fallback position when your processor wants to slow down your switch to another buyer or when supply is long and they want to cut the base price,

*continued on page 18*



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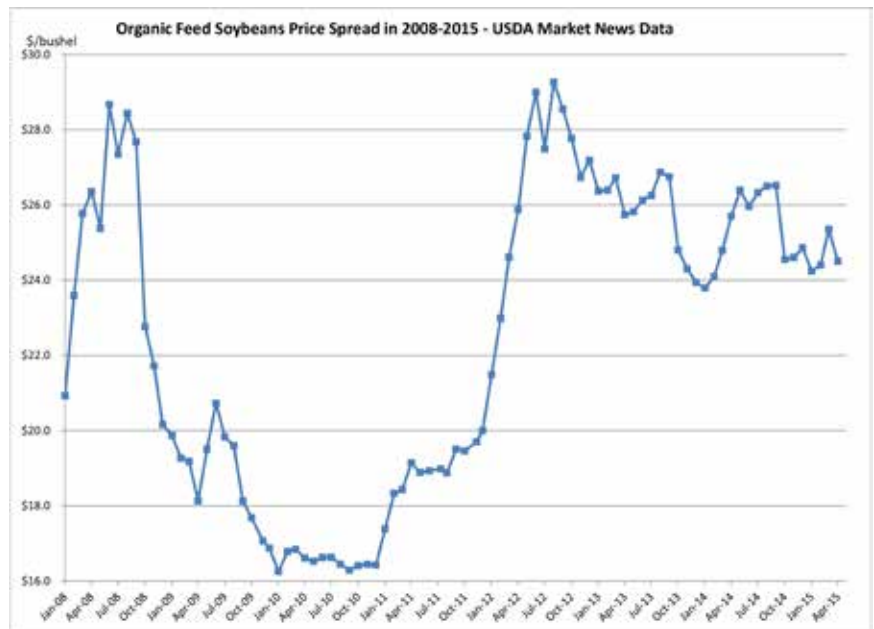
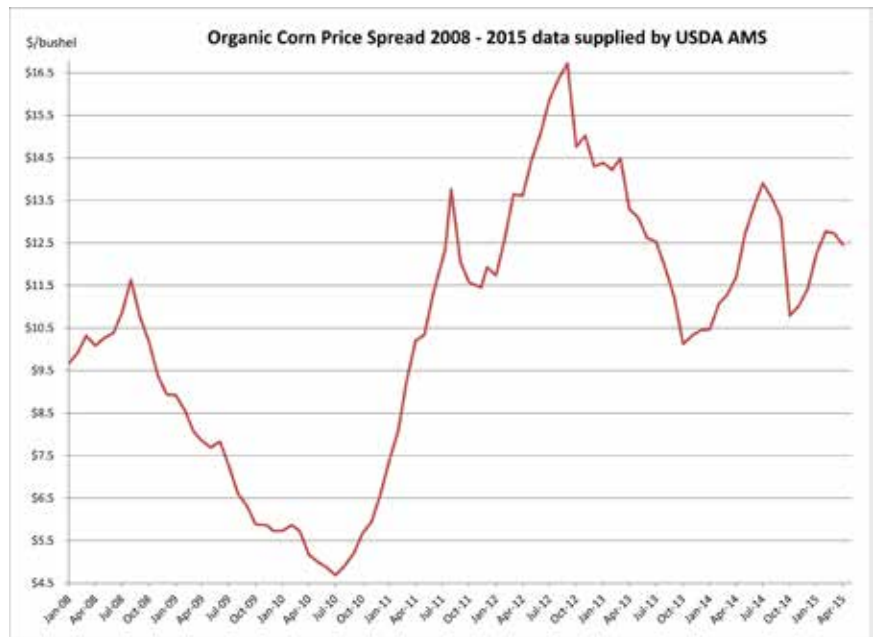


## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

*continued from page 17*

or when the smaller operations sell to larger companies who can handle expansion better. The date of your contract renewal is important, even down to the day, as some producers have found out. If you have to give six month notice prior to your contract renewal, a phone call or quick email is not good enough. If your buyer is telling you that there are restrictions on what you can and can't do as you move to another buyer, seek expert help from another producer or NODPA, as sometimes the buyers don't have all the facts. NODPA has three publications, by Jill Krueger, available on NODPA's website Resources page, to help producers in making decisions on their contracts: "Making the Most of Your Milk Check: What Dairy Farmers Need to Know About Assignments", "When Your Processor Requires More than Organic Certification: Additional Requirements in Organic Milk Contracts", and "Hushed Up: Confidentiality Clauses in Organic Milk Contracts". They can be downloaded for free or we can send you copies if you do not have access to a computer.

Organic grain prices are steady and demand is light to moderate for organic grains now that many producers are focused on the current planting season. Discussions surround weather and planting conditions nationwide, potential market conditions in regard to prices and yields at fall harvest, and ongoing concerns with transportation issues and imports in regard to pricing competitiveness. ♦



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## Organic Certification: Conversations with Patricia Kane, Accredited Certifiers Association and Lisa Engelbert, NOFA-NY Certified, LLC

*Certifiers are an essential part of the organic certification process and many times are the only point of contact that producers have with the USDA National Organic Program and how the regulations are interpreted. Certifiers are independent contractors and vary in how they are legally structured. We will be featuring different certification agencies to show where the similarities and difference are between them and their connection, or not, with an educational non-profit. In this issue, we have the broad perspective from Patricia Kane, coordinator of Accredited Certifier's Association, and a more hands-on view from long-time organic dairy farmer and certification specialist Lisa Engelbert of NOFA-NY Certified, LLC.*

### **An Interview with Patricia Kane, Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA)**

*Interview by Sonja Heyck-Merlin, NODPA Contributing Writer, with assistance from Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director*

#### **Can you please explain the mission and work of the Accredited Certifier's Association?**

We are an 11 year old non-profit, educational organization. Our mission states that we collaborate, educate and advocate for a sound and sensible approach to the implementation of the USDA organic standards and regulations. We currently have 50 accredited certifiers as members and 15 non-certifier supporting members. We're limited in our membership capabilities because we're restricted to accredited certifier agencies and a small number of supporting members. All our members are listed on our website, [www.accreditedcertifiers.org](http://www.accreditedcertifiers.org), and yes, NODPA is a supporting member. We work with certification agency staff members but supporting members also participate in our working groups if they have an interest in the issue.

Our work includes improving communication and collaboration among certifiers, providing certifier perspectives to the USDA National Organic Program (NOP), and issuing comments to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). We utilize working groups to develop positions and/or comments. We also host an annual 2-day training program for certifiers in conjunction with the annual NOP training. Informal meetings are also held in conjunction with NOSB meetings to discuss various issues.

#### **What are the ACA's most current educational initiatives regarding certification?**

At our yearly meeting we have a general discussion and then break into small groups which focus on issues such as inspection, management, crop production, livestock production, handling, and processing, and make a list of suggestions for areas where we see necessary action. Although we don't have a concrete list for this year as yet, we anticipate we will be developing comments on the Origin of Livestock Rule. This has been on the list now for three years but of course the rule hasn't been published yet but for three years but of course the rule hasn't been published yet but it sounds like we're getting closer. Certifiers would really like

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**Lisa Engelbert and family**

### **An Interview with Lisa Engelbert, Organic Certification Specialist, NOFA-NY Certified Organic, LLC**

*Coordinated by Nora Owens, NODPA News Editor*

#### **NOFA New York has both an educational arm and a certification body – how does this work in practice?**

NOFA-NY, Inc. based near Rochester, NY, is the parent company and the educational arm of NOFA-NY. They do advocacy and lobbying for organic issues; host field days and workshops throughout the year; and put on an amazing annual Winter Conference in Saratoga Springs every January. NOFA-NY Certified Organic, LLC is the certification arm of NOFA-NY and is based in Binghamton, NY. Our role is organic certification. We do workshops related to organic regulations and certification, and we pride ourselves in providing excellent service to our producers. Whenever possible, the two sides of NOFA-NY work together to provide information on organic farming and gardening to farmers and consumers.

#### **Grass fed is the new organic niche market that all processors are chasing. Is NOFA-NY developing standards for organic and grass fed and, if yes, what will be the main areas that will differ from organic certification? What challenges do you see with establishing and policing such a standard?**

NOFA-NY Certified Organic, LLC is offering a new Grass Fed Certification program to its certified organic dairy and meat producers. To be eligible for Grass Fed certification, organic certification must be in good standing, and animals in the Grass Fed certification

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## Patricia Kane

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clarification on the Origin of Livestock Rule.

Some other issues that have been identified are certification of grower groups<sup>1</sup> and consistency of label review. Also, we are working with the International Organic Inspectors Association to develop a joint solution to the NOP requirement for field evaluations of inspectors<sup>2</sup> which is resulting in numerous and duplicative evaluations of inspectors, sometimes up to 10 a year, if an inspector is working for multiple certifiers.

### **Can you please explain the Sound and Sensible initiative? Who developed it and why?**

It came from the NOP in late 2012, it stems from, I believe, the increasing paperwork requirements for certification and the effect this was having on operators, some of whom were leaving certification. In order to identify specific issues, ACA decided to host a meeting of various stakeholders - the NOP, National Organic Coalition (NOC), International Organic Inspectors Association (IOIA), Organic Trade Association (OTA), NOSB and certifiers to discuss what the issues were and what could be done. The meeting was held prior to the NOSB meeting in the spring of 2013. We identified many barriers to increased participation in organic certification and developed a road map, posted on our website, which was the outcome of this meeting. The NOP continued to talk about the Sound & Sensible initiative - and this

### **FOOTNOTES**

1. Grower group certification refers to the certification of a group of producers whose farms are uniform in most ways, and who are organized under one management and marketing system. Grower group certifications have historically been used for the certification of cooperatives located in geographical proximity, whose crops are marketed collectively. Primary crops produced by grower groups include coffee, cocoa, tea, spices, and tropical fruits.
2. Section 205.501(a)(6) of the USDA organic regulations requires that certifying agents conduct annual performance evaluations of all persons who review applications for certification, perform on-site inspections, review certification documents, evaluate qualifications for certification, make recommendations concerning certification, or make certification decisions and implement measures to correct any deficiencies in certification services.
3. "In late 2012, the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) announced a strengthened residue testing program to help increase consumer confidence in the \$32 billion organic industry worldwide. Beginning January 1, 2013, USDA organic certifying agents will test products from at least five percent of the organic farms and businesses that they certify each year. While testing has always been a part of organic product oversight, the new program specifies a minimum amount of testing that must occur." Miles McEvoy, National Organic Program Deputy Administrator.
4. "Any certified organic operation found to use prohibited substances or GMOs may face enforcement actions, including loss of certification and financial penalties. However, unlike many pesticides, there aren't specific tolerance levels in the USDA organic regulations for GMOs. As such, National Organic Program policy states that trace amounts of GMOs don't automatically mean the farm is in violation of the USDA organic regulations. In these cases, the certifying agent will investigate how the inadvertent presence occurred and recommend how it can be better prevented in the future. For example, they may require a larger buffer zone or more thorough cleaning of a shared grain mill." Miles McEvoy, National Organic Program Deputy Administrator.

spring - the USDA initiated a program to contract with organizations that will develop tools which will assist producers in the certification process. For example, there will be a pilot program for having a consultant assist operations with completion of the Organic System Plan. All of the information and tools developed through these contracts will be available in the public domain and should go a long way towards helping producers with certification. I'm looking forward to seeing the outcome of these projects.

### **What other improvements have come from the Sound and Sensible Initiative?**

During our spring 2013 meeting, we had discussions with the NOP about utilizing a shorter certification renewal form, and as a result, many certifiers have gone on to develop a shorter one. We also discussed the NOP Penalty Matrix and provided suggestions and examples of how certifiers look at non-compliance issues. By categorizing the types of non-compliances to identify which issues really compromise organic integrity, rather than issue a non-compliance for more minor issues, the impact on operators has been a more workable system. NOP has published a revised Penalty Matrix that is more incremental and does allow certifiers to work with producers over time on issues of concern rather than issue non-compliance notices. Another outcome relates to the educational aspect of certification. Certifiers have been reluctant to provide information to producers because they didn't want to be seen as consulting, which is prohibited. We all realize though that much of the information an operator receives they would receive from their inspector. It puts inspectors and certifiers in a tough position. Certifiers and inspectors want to be able to provide information to producers and I believe they are more comfortable with this now. We hope that with the refinements in the certification process the process will work better for everybody.

### **Is one of the aims of the initiative to bring more uniformity in enforcing the NOP standards?**

I don't really think that's part of the process. I've never seen any words to that effect. It's really focused on providing producers with tools so they're comfortable with certification.

### **Do you have any further thoughts on enforcing the uniformity of standards amongst certifiers?**

We certainly have discussions but it's very difficult because certifiers are individual agencies with varying procedures. Enforcing standards uniformly is overseen by the NOP accreditation process. However, the NOP auditors don't always have the same interpretation either. I don't know what the key is to that. A lot of the focus of our discussions is on differences in how we enforce the standards, and hopefully if someone sees these discussions they'll think about what their process is. I would really need some specific examples about areas of concern which exist about uniform enforcement to comment anymore.

### **The ACA conducts regular educational workshop with the USDA NOP. What is the aim of those workshops?**

We have our annual 2-day training and share a third day with the

*continued on next page, bottom*



## Lisa Engelbert

*continued from page 19*

program must be fed 100% organic grass and grass-based feeds. No grain is allowed. Because all feed is verified during the organic inspection, it shouldn't be a burden to the producers or to the certification office to go the extra step and verify 100% Grass Fed.

### **Do you envision a time when producers will have the option to complete forms on-line?**

NOFA-NY Certified Organic, LLC currently has forms available on-line that you can fill in, save and print, but not in a live database where producers can go in and change their info. This is something we are planning for the future.

### **What changes do you anticipate your producers will need to make when the Origin of Livestock regulation becomes law?**

Currently, there are many different interpretations and grey areas on this issue which permits different standards regarding replacements on organic dairy farm.

### **Do you predict a standard form, similar to the detail that NOFA-NY Certified Organic, LLC requires, that all certifiers will use? What certificate will individual animals carry when they go for auction or slaughter?**

We are looking forward to seeing the Origin of Livestock rule. It's something we've been anticipating for many years. We're hopeful that it will clarify the Origin of Livestock issue once and for all, and bring all producers on a level playing field. We don't anticipate many changes for our producers once the rule is published, because we've always monitored both slaughter and dairy eligibility as well as transitioned status on our producers' animal list, and we've never allowed the continuous transition of conventional animals. We'll have to see how the final rule reads before deciding if any changes to our current procedure are necessary.

### **The USDA has mandated increased testing of organic inputs and products. What is the likely effect on livestock operations?**

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*continued from previous page*

NOP. It works really well. 100 people attended this year representing 43 different certifying agencies. This year the NOP brought a lot of staff. NOP's training focus is on the guidance and instruction documents that they put out the previous year and how to best implement those requirements. NOP also has an open Q and A session. Lots of times there isn't an answer but they're made aware of the question. They're generally careful with giving information because they want to be sure that it's in line with their other requirements. The NOP staff also attends our 2-day training and they're available to answer questions. People really appreciate the opportunity to interact directly with the NOP other than in an audit situation. Sometimes it's better to have an informal discussion.

### **Increasingly, small to mid-size operations that sell directly to**

Certifiers are required to do residue testing on at least 5% of their certified operations each year. If there is a positive test result, the farm will need to investigate what caused the positive test result. Additional testing may be required. Because all products from all production types (Livestock, Crops and Handling) are being tested, the effect on livestock operations won't be any greater than other types of operations.

### **In light of the WHO report, are your members reporting any glyphosate residues in conventional manure? Do you have any recommendations for producers who may be using conventional manures?**

We have not had any specific reports of glyphosate in conventional manure used on organic farms. We've always recommended that producers be aware of what could be in off-farm sourced manure.

The concept of organically certified operations having to co-exist with contaminating crops and production practices is being promoted by the USDA, how do you think this will affect how you implement organic regulations, especially when loads of corn and soybeans are rejected for GMO contamination and then sold for livestock feed?

The unfortunate thing about co-existing is that all of the burden is put on the organic farmer. The organic farmer is required to maintain a buffer zone on his/her land to help mitigate spray or pollen drift from neighboring conventional fields. If a load of feed is rejected for GMO contamination, we would look at the level of contamination before allowing it to be used for livestock feed. We would also have discussions with the agency that certified the feed. The GMO contamination issue is a difficult one that will likely get worse over time.

### **Increasingly, small to mid-size operations that sell directly to consumers are not becoming certified because they see no benefit for their operations, preferring to use "local", "better than organic", and "GMO-Free", that are free but lack any accountability and definition. How does this impact the integrity and long term future of organic certification and the organic label as a marketing tool?**

Increasingly, consumers are starting to understand the benefit of organic certification and the verification it provides. We are hopeful that this trend will continue, and that more small and mid-sized operations will continue to certify in the future. ♦

### **consumers are not becoming certified because they see no benefit for their operations, preferring to use "local", "better than organic", and "GMO Free", which are free but lack any accountability and definition. What are your thoughts on this issue?**

Certainly someone who is deciding whether or not to certify has a host of issues in that decision depending on their market, the products they produce, and their capacity to produce. I think a whole lot of it is based on having an informed consumer. If the consumers are looking for certification then producers will be aware of that. If you're selling at your local farmers' market for example, you will not need to be certified, if you are not selling more than \$5,000 in product annually in organically certified product.

### **In the ACA comments on "Guidance on GMO testing" it seems like**

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## Organic Industry News

### Rick & Bob Arnold

*continued from page 1*

until October of 2010 when both Rick and Bob retired from the business because of their advancing FTD, and Kirk Arnold, son of Rick and Kathie, became Twin Oaks Dairy's new partner.

Bob's passion was working the land and milking "his girls" as he called his cows. Bob was very proud of being part of the conversion of Twin Oaks Dairy to become the first certified organic dairy farm in Cortland County, New York in 1998. Bob was a lifelong Yankees fan and proudly wore his baseball cap everywhere. He was active in his community through the years as Town Justice and served on the Truxton Cemetery Association and Truxton Grievance Board. Most recently, he served as Secretary/Treasurer for the Organic Dairy Farmer's Cooperative.

Rick was a consummate baseball pitcher and a lifelong Yankees fan, as well as an enduring NY Giants fan. He coached his son's summer soccer team for several years. He enjoyed playing with his kids in the evening after a long day's work, taking hikes in the woods with his family on Sunday afternoons, and playing all kinds of sports with family and friends.

Both Rick and Bob donated gallons of blood through the years

to the American Red Cross and were avid readers. Both loved to sing, following the talent of their Grandfather Arnold who had been a yodeler in his native Switzerland. The barn would often be filled with both of their voices singing along with the radio. Rick's beautiful voice and guitar graced many a family wedding and other events. Rick wrote the lyrics and melodies to several original songs, including one for the Truxton Bicentennial, one to his wife at their wedding, and one for his daughter on her 16th birthday.

Both are survived by their wives and children: Bob's wife, Miriam, and daughters Elizabeth and Maria, and Rick's wife, Kathie, and children Carly and Kirk. Checks can be made out to the "Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania". Please clearly indicate "Penn FTD Center" in the memo line and send to: Attention: Lindsey D. Walker, Director of Development Penn Medicine, 3535 Market Street, Suite 750, Philadelphia, PA 19104.

### An Interview with Rick Arnold: March 6, 2004

Following are excerpts from an interview of Rick, done on March 6, 2004 by his daughter, Carly, for her Sociology 101 class. It is interesting to read Rick's observations on farming, the organic dairy industry, and GMOs, eleven years later, and see how prescient

*continued on page 24*



**Rick & Kathie Arnold and Bob and Miriam Arnold.**

## How to cut fertilizer costs without affecting yield

*By Neal Kinsey*

When commodity prices are low more emphasis tends to be placed on how to economize operations due to less overall potential for generating needed income.

Somehow whatever is being done needs to confirm whether it will be profitable?

This is especially true in agricultural production as input costs continue to rise. With ever more rules and restrictions, and less return per acre at the same level of production that once was considered above average, trying to cut out every possible expense is a popular choice.

To some farmers cutting back on fertilizer inputs may seem like the best approach, but can anybody afford to do that when it means reduced yield? The hard question to be addressed here is how to cut fertilization expenses without compromising the rate of return per unit of production. Soils require a certain amount of each nutrient to produce the expected yield. If a specific yield is required, then cutting what will actually make that yield possible is a big mistake. It is too late to change once the crop comes up short at harvest.

In some situations it is possible to achieve a desired crop yield without adding any fertilizer at all. Some soils have the needed amount to achieve the projected yield, but normally that is not the case. Most soils will lack one or more nutrients that the crop requires to provide the best potential production. When no inputs are shown to be needed, it is usually due to one of two reasons. Either the yields are at the bare minimum in terms of what it is possible for that soil to produce, or the fields already have from good to excellent fertility levels due to the proper application and adequate maintenance of fertility over past years. Even then reducing fertilizer rates may only be possible for crop requirements in specific cases.

Ideally what is needed is a way to reduce fertilizer expenses and increase yields at the same time. But when that must be ruled out based on the need for more fertility, the question becomes, "What can be cut out as fertilizer for the next crop that would be most unlikely to limit yield potential?"

This is where an accurate soil test can be of tremendous value. Farmers cannot manage what they cannot measure. It may be possible to grow a crop without adding more fertilizer, but only if there is already sufficient fertility in that soil to do the job! You need to know that is the case before you decide what fertilizers to cut. Just cutting back and hoping for better weather, or adding a small amount of some "improved" combination of nutrients at less cost per acre but a much higher cost per ton to make up for what is being cut out is not generally the best answer. Farmers need to learn for themselves what their soils need in terms of fertility to produce both top yields and top quality.

The old idea of how much can I get and how little can be spent to do so is still quite prevalent in agriculture today. It is the mantra of those who want to sell farmers and growers what they can supply to "try" to properly "feed the crop" by advocating that feeding the soil to let the soil feed the crop is far too expensive. Crops cannot get what is needed for the most economical production costs from something that is designed to cut corners and cheat the system by starving the soil.

Even if it were possible to know exactly what each crop needs and supply it directly to the plant – in the end YOU LOSE! It is not the person who sold it to you that lost anything. You have paid him to teach you how to use up your own soil's wealth until the scrimping finally affects the soil and its condition. The soil is the plants stomach and when you rob the soil of its needs, or even short-change it, what has actually been accomplished? Eventually indigestion will be the result. The soil gets sick, and most soils have been sick for a long time!

Even with ideal soil fertility, if not properly fed, sickness will always be the end result! The soil test is a measuring stick. Find one that measures correctly and stick with it. Every farmer needs this tool!

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## Organic Industry News

### Rick and Bob Arnold

*continued from page 22*

some were and how organic dairy farmers are still faced with some of the same issues. Unfortunately, the FTD robbed Rick of his cognition in later years to be able to know how the organic dairy industry did grow and develop over the years, much as he envisioned, and it also denied him of his long term wish to be able to farm in partnership with his son.

#### Why do you like farming?

Because I've always felt that producing food for people to consume is an honest way to make a living and consequently making a good living is even more reason to do it, which is something that I currently do. I'm also glad to be self-employed, so I don't have to answer to someone else in the job that I do other than myself.

#### What are the benefits of being self-employed?

Self-employment, in as much as working at home, you get to spend much more time with your wife and kids, plus the fact my kids were homeschooled. I probably spent ten times as much time with my kids as the average guy who goes to work every day, and I'd say right there is the number one reason to be self-employed.

### Going through college, what got you into farming rather than being a teacher?

What got me into farming was being raised on a farm. I was already used to the regimen, used to getting up early, loved cows, loved the outdoors, loved work with machinery--all the things I needed to like to be a farmer. The main reason some of the joy of farming disappeared was because there was such little financial gain from being a farmer, but now that we are in a position where we have a decent financial gain, that makes it even easier to be a farmer, because not only can you enjoy being outside, enjoy being closer to the earth and to your family and doing things we like to do like mechanic work, farm work, outdoor work, putting in hay, putting up baleage, things like that, but actually make a good living at the same time. It is something that can't be beat.

### Do you feel that more people would stay on farms if they could have made it?

Yes, because more people did, particularly back in the 60s and 70s, when the milk price was among the most favorable of the last century; there were many, many times as many farmers as today because they were making a living. In the late 1970s, '80s, and into the '90s, when the price of milk wasn't good, we saw an exodus of a lot of farmers.

### Being an organic farm, what do you feel about that market?

I think the organic market has led to a much better income for

*continued on page 25*

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our farm, where at the same time feeling better about our farm because we are treating the cows better by getting them outside, with access to pasture whenever they can. It gives me some hope that one or both of my children may be part of the farm because the money is there to employ them. And the good feeling about being an organic farm is that it can be passed on to the generations, I should hope, because I believe the organic market will always be there.

I didn't have that impression when I started, but I've got much more of that impression now. I thought it might be a flash in the pan, something that we'd get into for two or three years but then the bottom would go out of it, but people have really adopted the organic regimen as what they want as a consumer, and I think it is a burgeoning market that is going to continue to grow more, with all the pesticides used and all the bad things that have come out about what they can do to you.

**In terms of the organic dairy industry sustainability, to what extent do you think it will grow?**

The organic industry could become almost as big as it is in Europe where right now it is 10% of the milk market, where here we are lucky if it is 1% or 1 1/2% of the milk market--that is a lot of room for growth. Here, we have been organic now for over 5 years, to get to the 1%. It could be 25-30 years to ever get to the level of 10%. I'm not saying that 10% is the only level, it could go above that. There are things yet to come that I don't know about.

**How do you feel the government should partake in organic?**

They should be consistent in their interpretation of the organic rule that all of us farmers have to toil under. They should make it more stringent so that inspectors inspect all the same. When 10 inspectors inspect the same farm, they would come up with the same results, and they enforce the same law, because right now I think there is a lot of diversity. Some inspectors are a lot easier than other inspectors. Some inspecting agencies are not requiring what other inspection agencies are. The government was supposed to make everybody be the same stringency/strictness across the board. That doesn't seem to have happened. There is a lot of confusion there yet. But I think if the government gets to that point where they require everybody to enforce equally, it would be a lot leveler ship that we would be charting waters in.

**Does there need to be government control of it?**

I think that it will eventually come to it because the market has gotten so big. There wasn't government control before and they saw a need that there had to be. Now that the ball is already started that way, I don't think there is any getting away from it. I think the government is going to continue to be involved but so far, mainly just as an enforcement agent and that is, I think, about how far they need to go. Hopefully, we won't get to a federal marketing order system for organic and all that we had for conventional.

Since you grew up in this community, and it was and is an

**agricultural community, and looking at the larger society, how do you feel farmers are viewed by the larger community?**

I think we are well respected in the agricultural community, and I think currently gaining more respect in the non-farming community. I think farmers are looked upon as better than they might have been 20 years ago. I think it is because, especially as organic farmers go, people have a very vague and reasonable concern about where their food is coming from and that people in the know, know where their food is coming from and they want to know that it comes from a farm that does a good job. And so the farmers doing the best job are the best farmers. I think that is where the support comes from. People are willing to pay more to get better quality. And they should expect that quality.


**And so they take pride in the farm that is giving them that better quality?**

Yes, exactly. In other words, I think organic consumers have a very good opinion of their organic farmers.

**Do you feel threatened by genetically modified crops?**


Yes! Look at what Monsanto is doing to flip the legal system up on its head. By growing this GM crop and having it blow over onto somebody else's land and then taking their crop because it [the pollen] blows over there. It can't be allowed, it has to be adjudicated out. It is going to the Supreme Court. I guess we

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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION: FEATURED FARM

## Sunny Morning Holsteins, Strum, WI

### New barn has enormous impact on both animals and family

*continued from page 1*

milking parlor and I started milking 22 Jerseys conventionally. This was in 2001. I loved being more involved with the cattle and the day-to-day handling,” Matt explained about his beginning stages of dairying which he transitioned to organic production in 2003. Introduced by family friends, Beka joined Matt on his leased Minnesota farm when the two were married in 2007 where, they said, “We were running land all over the place, trying to manage three farms spread out over 20 miles.”

Their current farm is 325 acres with about 100 acres in pasture, 35 acres of woodland, and the rest mostly crop ground. The farm was certified organic in 1992 and the Fendrys purchased it as a turn-key operation, choosing to leave their Jerseys behind in Minnesota, purchasing the herd of Holsteins which were already there. Beka pointed out the challenges of their early years milking on their new farm: “We bought the farm with about 75 cows, 60 milking, and started with an old 60 cow tie-stall that had been remodeled into a free stall with the feed alley right down the center. The stalls were too small for our cows, the ventilation was poor, and the feeding situation was tough as we had to dump feed with a small machine that fit in the feed alley and clean everything out by hand. The manure system was not very functional, and the single 8 parlor drove us nuts because you’d get a batch of cows in and then stand and wait.”

Some farms struggle with such inefficiencies but with youth on their side, Matt, 33, and Beka, 27, began discussing building a new barn that would allow them to be more productive with their time and energy. “We’d been looking at building a new barn and then I met a VES dealer at the World Dairy Expo whom I spoke with at length,” said Matt about the visioning process of their new facility. VES Environmental Solutions LLC designs barns and ventilation systems throughout the US and was looking for a smaller research facility and thought the Fendry’s farm was a suitable fit. “The site was cho-

sen based primarily on where they could place a manure pit,” Beka said. “We kept hitting rock in all of our test digs but eventually were able to find the perfect spot.” She added that “the biggest financial step was running cash flows to be sure that the barn would pay for itself and that we had a strong enough land base to support the animals. We started construction in the spring of 2013 and moved our cows over in October of that year, purchasing 20 new heifers to fill the barn.”

Completed in 2013, the four-row 98’x 175’ barn houses 120 sand bedded free stalls with drive through feeding and lock up. It has had an enormous impact on the quality of life for both the cows and this farm family. “The cows are a lot more comfortable now,” Matt said, and Beka added that she “loves it; it has been a fabulous change.” The free stalls are 10 inches larger than the old 38 inch stanchions; more accommodating to the Fendrys large framed Holsteins which average 1400-1500 pounds. Inside the barn, four 72-inch cyclone fans hang at a 30 degree angle above the free stalls and on one end of the barn there are six more 72-inch fans. “The barn is a hybrid between tunnel and cyclone ventilation,” explained Matt, “the fans should keep a consistent wind speed through the barn between 7 and 8 miles per hour. It’s a slow circulation of air with the ventilation coming from one end and the cows are much more comfortable.” The barn uses a fog system rather than a traditional mist system to cool the air; there are small pipes or tubes hung with the cyclone fans which have tiny holes in them so as the water circulates, it creates tiny beads or mist and is able to drop the temperature by nearly 20 degrees on hot days. During the winter, the fans are turned on to a lower level variable speed and the peak of the barn is closed, pulling warm air down to the cow level. “This provides drier and warmer air in the winter rather than colder, damper air,” noted Matt. As a research station for VES, groups from Japan, China, the UK and other US states often tour the Fendrys’ innovative climate controlled barn.







In the new barn, Matt and Beka upgraded to a double-8 parallel DeLaval parlor with in-floor heat and 28-inch wide stalls replacing the old parlor which was a single-8 and had 27-inch stalls. The parlor has a low line instead of a high pipeline like they were used to. The Fendrys considered robotic milkers and a computerized monitoring system but because of cost neither was included in the upgrade. Currently, they milk three times a day at 5 AM, 1 PM and 9 PM. "It's a basic parlor," they noted, "but it's upgradeable. We just wanted to get a good base started." Chore efficiency has improved immensely with the new barn. Milking alone generally took 4 man hours but now all the chores, including scrape down, feeding, and wash up, take about 3 ½ to 4 man hours. The Fendrys have 1 full-time and 1 part-time employee and have chosen to buck the standard paradigm that only the farmers are capable of the nuances of milking the herd, noting that "with the right training, you can teach someone how to milk the cows. It is better for us to use our limited time in putting up high quality forage, managing rations and feeding the cows, and operating the business."

With a limited amount of hours in a day, the efficiencies of the new barn have allowed the Fendrys to focus on their forage program which covers another 400 leased acres running fees of \$75-100 per acre. Matt hasn't had difficulty piecing together the nearly 700 contiguous acres that they farm but did note that "it is getting more difficult to rent land, with cropping moving into the area and driving up rental prices." The concern about co-existence with neighboring conventional farmers is minimal because the Fendrys have the advantage of continuity of their acreage, the geography of the area, and woodland buffers. They produce all of their own feed, often with surplus for sale, although drought has had a considerable effect on yields in the last few years. They also purchase protein concentrate from a local mill- a mixture of flax, roasted and raw beans fed at an average rate of five pounds per cow throughout the year. Fields spend 2 to 3 years in alfalfa which is planted with a nurse crop of

peas and oats at a rate of 100 pounds an acre. They harvest about three tons of the peas and oats as baleage per acre and it usually tests at 18% protein, which Matt noted, "makes great heifer feed." Ideally, fields then spend one year in corn although sometimes it stretches to two, followed by a rye cover crop and then back to alfalfa. Cropping plans for this year include 200 acres of corn, 70 acres chopped and the rest harvested as dry corn, 200 acres of oats which will be planted on some ground that is being transitioned and 300 acres of alfalfa.

Protein from the Fendry's forage runs about 20%, comparable to that of the 100 acres of pasture where the new barn is centrally located. High tensile wire marks the perimeter of the pasture and then permanent five acre strips are sized off with poly tape and grazed by the milk herd during the night hours, meeting the NOP pasture requirement of a minimum of 30% dry matter intake from pasture for 120 days. Matt's records indicate that his milk herd is at about 35% DMI from pasture during the official 120 day grazing season. Another 80-90 head of heifers and young stock are grazed across the street on another 50 acres of pasture obtaining roughly 85% DMI from pasture.

While there has been a recent highlight of the organic grass-milk sector which is typically characterized by highly intensive rotational grazing, the Fendry's operation is less pasture dominated. Matt thoughtfully validated this management style: "I've been on both ends of grazing strategy. I used to do full-on rotational grazing back in the early 2000's when I was running my herd of Jerseys. The profitability wasn't there for us. If you're starting off and you're young and you have a farm payment you have to maintain production.

Not every farm is the same. Some farms have great success with grazing but with our operation we run a better system when we have control over the cow's ration. If we don't run a high TMR in the summer we lose too much body condition and our MUN's (milk

*continued on page 8*

## FEATURED FARM

*continued from page 27*

urea nitrogen) are through the roof.” The Fendrys rely on measurable and observable signs to tell them that the cows are healthy- hair coat, happy lines, manure consistency, somatic cell count (averages 100,000) and calving intervals. All signs indicate that the herd is in great health. They are able to produce roughly 22,000 pounds per cow a year while maintaining this health with a goal of increasing production to 25,000 pounds per cow per year.

The Fendrys have three young children: Nora-6, Amity-2, and Taiten-8 months. Their business decisions must always be made with the family in mind and this is partially why Matt and Beka have recently gone to custom chopping. “We used to do all of our own chopping,” Beka explained, “but what used to take Matt and me a week to do, we can hire out for 24 hrs. Where else could we find two guys for a week a month? We can’t afford to keep them around and we can’t justify purchasing the larger more efficient machinery necessary to produce the high quality feed we need. The custom chopping has gone a long way in decreasing labor intensity.” The free labor of extended family in the form of childcare and farm work that many dairy families rely on is often overlooked. Without this advantage, Matt and Beka must be realistic about balancing the demands of providing the tremen-

dous care that both dairy cows and young children require. Beka laughed when asked about this delicate balance and said, “Ask me in about 18 years. When Nora was little she farmed alongside us all day but with the addition of two more kids we’ve had to hire a part-time nanny in order for me to keep up with my responsibilities to the farm which keep everything rolling; the numbers, organizing, payroll, scheduling, keeping everyone fed.” Matt added that, “We’ve had to start specializing in what we do best. We focus on the dairy and cropping. That’s what we do well.” Fortunately, the new barn and shift to custom chopping has streamlined their business enough so that they have been able to enjoy a few family vacations in the past two years.

Though they both quipped that the older they get, the less they know, the Fendrys had some sound advice for young people considering dairying: “It is capital intensive but it can be done. You have to set your goals. Consider organic for its sustainable pay price rather than the conventional roller coaster we started on. Try renting for a few years until you can get your feet on the ground. Do what’s best on your farm and look at the options around you. What works best for your neighbor might not work for you. Don’t be afraid of trying new things. Most importantly, make sure your cows are happy.” ♦

*The Fendrys can be reached at:*

715-695-3198 or at

*mrfendry@tcc.coop*

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## ORGANIC PRODUCTION

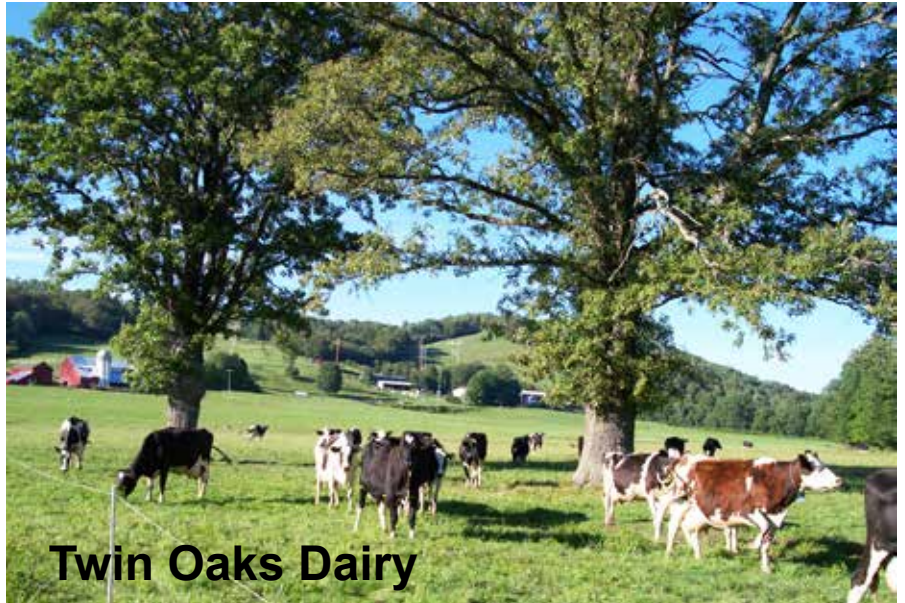
### Bob & Rick Arnold

*continued from page 25*

will see. But I think that is a concern. That is why we try to own as much land around us as we can in buffer zones to keep the GMOs out. But the wind can do funny things. We can't control the wind.

**What do you think is the future of farming?**  
**Do you think more people are going to get out of it or into it?**

The net effect is there will be fewer and fewer farmers. Unfortunately, I think that is the writing on the wall. I don't know that it always has to be that way. Maybe the bottom will fall out of it and the small farms will be able to find a niche again. I don't see it happening anytime soon. It is not happening now. A lot of the farms going into business now do less than \$10,000 a year and they are a small farm. They are like somebody who has a weekend farm who has another job—a little crop farm or a little beef farm—they like to do it; it's not that they make all that much money off it.



**Do you think most farmers have an off farm job?**

Yeah, but not them per say, their wives. You bet. I think the majority of farms are that way.

**I wonder if that is by choice or again for support.**

Maybe the wife, by choice, does want an off farm job but it is probably not all by choice, it is often by necessity as well, to maintain the standard of living that they want to have. ♦

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## PATRICIA KANE

*continued from page 21*

**the ACA was leaning towards having a percentage allowance in testing for GMO's in the future. Please comment on that position and whether there has been any changes in your or the NOP position since April 2014.**

We sent a request to the NOP for clarification on their sampling and testing guidance for GMO residue testing. The percentage allowance is a tool but we're not advocating for it. We like the fact that the NOP standard is a process based one because there are so many variables to be considered in organic production. If there were strictly no residues, the "process" of organic production would be overlooked. We want to have some tools to work with on the GMO issue. The NOP has not responded to our letter they just said that they had provided sampling and testing guidance for GMO residue testing.<sup>3</sup> Certifiers are expanding their testing and will be addressing GMO's when results indicate contamination.<sup>4</sup> Certifying agents consider contamination very serious and do investigate it. Certifiers determine if the operation is implementing the standard and at what level and what may need to be done to improve avoidance procedures.

**Producers are frustrated with the slow pace of implementing regulations. Do you have any insights to share on the reasons why the process seems to move so slowly?**

This is really two distinctly different issues. There is a distinction between the NOSB recommendations and the implementation by the NOP. The NOP and USDA are not required to implement all recommendations of the NOSB, except USDA NOP does need to address the NOSB's materials recommendations. The Secretary must publish any proposed amendment to the National List and seek public comment, and must note any changes the Secretary has made to the Board's recommendation in order for the NOSB recommendation to become a regulatory requirement.

If the NOP decides it's going to do rule making, like the Origin of Livestock Rule, they first must receive an NOSB recommendation. NOP then drafts a proposed rule and it undergoes legal review, a department review, and then a review by the Executive Office of Management and Budget. Then, it is published as a proposed rule on the Federal Register and the NOP receives comments and reviews them. If there are no substantial comments against the proposed rule they will publish a final rule with an implementation schedule. If there are substantial comments they may have to go through the entire process again. It takes years but it's the process that all governmental agencies use. Everyone's frustrated; we would like clarification on many issues that would require a rule change. We have hope though because the NOP keeps adding staff and they're showing a commitment to meeting the needs of the program. Rulemaking is pretty frustrating no matter what you do.

*continued on page 32*

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## 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](mailto:john.cleary@organicvalley.coop) or Steve Getz at 207-465-6927 or [steve.getz@organicvalley.coop](mailto:steve.getz@organicvalley.coop).
- In New York, contact David Hardy at (608) 479-1200 or [david.hardy@organicvalley.coop](mailto:david.hardy@organicvalley.coop).
- In the Southeast, contact Gerry Cohn at (919) 605-5619 or [gerry.cohn@organicvalley.coop](mailto:gerry.cohn@organicvalley.coop).
- Central to Western PA, contact Solomon Meyer at (814) 515-6827 or [solomon.meyer@organicvalley.coop](mailto:solomon.meyer@organicvalley.coop).
- In Southeast Pennsylvania and Maryland, contact Terry Ingram at (717) 413-3765 or [terry.ingram@organicvalley.coop](mailto: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](mailto:farmerhotline@organicvalley.coop) and online at [www.farmers.coop](http://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](http://www.upstateniagara.com)

### Natural by Nature

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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

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### 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](mailto: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](mailto:noraowens@comcast.net).

# Classified Ads

## Animals

**Two year old open, polled, dairy Devon cross heifer for sale for \$800,** and a six month old Brown Swiss cross heifer for sale for \$500. Both are certified organic (GOA) and 100 percent grass-fed. Contact: Heidi Tafel at 607-336-3656. Location: South New Berlin, NY.

**We are currently selling our certified organic dairy herd** as we are selling our farm. We have cross bred cows of Jersey/Ayrshire/Lineback. We have milkers, dry cows and heifers. Contact: Sue Balfe Email: farmersue38@yahoo.com. Phone: 802-989-3134. Location: Orwell, VT

**Certified organic bull and heifer calves for sale** from well-established no-grain dairy in central NY/PA area. Friesian, Jersey, New Zealand genetics. Contact Rob Moore, cowpoke2@verizon.net, 607-699-7968. Location: Nichols, NY

**For Sale: 200 bred and first calf heifers.** They have started to freshen, and remain for sale as they come in. Call Pete Mapstone at (315) 416-3375. Location: Onondaga County NY

## Employment

**Cheese Sales Manager,** Shelburne Farms, Shelburne VT. There is a job opening at Shelburne Farms that provides a variety of responsibilities and the opportunity to bring together interests in agriculture, marketing, business, and sales. For more information, go to <http://www.shelburnefarms.org/about/jobs/cheese-sales-manager> or contact Ellen Fox, Manager of Cheese and Catalog, Shelburne Farms, 802-985-0345

## Equipment

**For sale: Ford 7413 Heavy Duty tractor loader** in good condition with 8 ft. straight edge bucket. Came off Ford 8730 tractor. Hydraulic hoses hook up to tractor remotes hydraulics in back of tractor. Dedicated organic use- no equipment purge needed. Asking \$3000. Contact: Loyal Martin, loyalane-sha@gmail.com, 315 783 0223. Location: Philadelphia, NY

**For Sale:** John Deere 1240 Plateless Corn Planter \$1300, Gehl Hi Throw Blower \$600, Yetter 15 Ft. Rotary Hoe \$1400, Hesston BP25 Tub Grinder \$4200. Contact Jeff @ Mitchell Farm Avoca, NY - Steuben County (607-566-8477 or Mitchellorganics@Hotmail.com) Location: Avoca, NY - Steuben County.

## Forage

**For Sale: NOFA-NY Certified Organic 4x4 Rd BALEAGE** (Clover, Clover Mix), 4 x 4 1/2 Rd BEDDING HAY, and TIMOTHY SEED. Call Jeff at Mitchell Farm 607-566-8477 or email Mitchellorganics@Hotmail.com. Location: Avoca, NY - Steuben County.

**For Sale: NOFA-NY Certified Organic BALEAGE.** Also TIMOTHY SEED, cleaned and bagged on farm. Contact Jeff @ Mitchell Farm Avoca, NY - Steuben County (607-566-8477 or Mitchellorganics@Hotmail.com)



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## PATRICIA KANE

*continued from page 30*

**What do you see as the future of organic certification and do you think it can maintain its integrity in the market place?**

I think it's very hopeful. Personally, I like being able to look at a product and be able to find out where it came from. As long as there are curious consumers there will be a good market for organic. Our label has the history and confidence with consumers and was designed with the process of continual improvement in mind. There's no reason the organic market won't continue to expand. There's nothing else comparable to this 3rd party evaluation system of organic – nothing with such an extensive process for verification. ♦

*Patricia Kane, Coordinator  
Accredited Certifiers Association, Inc.  
PO Box 472, Port Crane, NY 13833  
phone/fax: 607.648.3259  
cell: 607.725.4211  
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## SAVE THE DATE:

## 2015 NODPA Field Days: October 1 &amp; 2, 2015

*BW's Restaurant and Banquet Facility, Davis Countryside Meadows, Pavilion, NY 14525*

Planning has begun for the 15th annual NODPA Field Days that will be held in Pavilion, a western New York town outside of Rochester, in Genesee County between Genesee and Batavia, on October 1 & 2, 2015. Our agenda is taking shape around the urgent question that the NODPA Board and Representatives have been asking: "What can we do now so that our children and grandchildren will want to be, and can be, full-time farmers?" So, as we develop the program, one emerging theme will be about organic dairy farming for the next generation. We are fortunate to be able to visit one organic dairy farm that is already incorporating strategies that acknowledge the changing needs of their next generation. The Tillotson Family will host the farm tour at their multi-generational Cottonwood Farms, LLC, in Pavilion, NY. In addition to this theme, there will be information sessions, discussions and educational workshops that focus on the important and

timely issues confronting all organic dairy farm families. In addition to a strong educational agenda and informative farm tour, we will have our annual social hour and banquet, featuring local, organic food, and NODPA's Annual Meeting on Thursday evening, and our producer-only meeting on Friday morning. You will be able to visit our diverse trade show throughout the meeting, and will have many opportunities to catch up with old friends and meet new ones. More information on the agenda will follow in the July NODPA News and online at [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com), so for now, SAVE THE DATE. Look for Sponsorship and Trade show information and opportunities in your email and mailboxes in the next couple of weeks. For more information, or if you have questions about sponsoring or exhibiting at the 15th annual NODPA Field Days, contact NODPA Field Days Coordinator Nora Owens anytime at [noraowens@comcast.net](mailto:noraowens@comcast.net) or 413-772-0444.

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## NET UPDATE

### Recent ODairy Discussions

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

Several farmers weighed in on the discussion of glyphosate (Round Up) last month. New research is pointing to both long and short-term damaging effects on both soil and human health. Glyphosate has always been prohibited from organic production, but some farmers have reported that tests have picked up trace amounts in organic crops. A grain processor suggested that testing methods should be improved to make the tests more accurate. Other producers questioned the allowance of conventional manure as an input on organic farms, as it appears that glyphosate may have a residual presence that may contaminate organic crops.

A producer who is new to ultrasound pregnancy checks asked about a protocol for keeping the probe from spreading disease as you move from cow to cow, and herd to herd. One farmer suggested alcohol to disinfect the equipment between cows. A vet suggested following the manufacturer's suggestions for cleaning, or to use probe sleeves. Another producer suggested that the risk of disease transmission within a herd varies with the Johnes' status of the herd; if the herd is negative for Johnes' disease, what are your other concerns? Most vets still practice traditional pregnancy checks with the same sleeve on multiple animals unless there is a reason to do otherwise.

A farmer had a pen of 9 week old piglets develop a fever, cough, and persistent diarrhea. A vet suggested that the first thing was to get the piglets some fresh air by giving them the option of going outside. He generally does not see respiratory problems in pigs raised in hutches or groups pens with outdoor access. It was also suggested that immune-boosting herbs be added to the feed – Echinacea, garlic, and barberry.

A two-week old calf with "pretty bad" scours was now bloated. Advice included adding slippery elm or mallow to an electrolyte mix, and tube-feeding if the calf does not suck. Feed 4 to 6 times daily with smaller amounts than normal. De-bloat the calf with a tube, then give ½ cup mineral oil. Follow up with Carbo veg for bloat, 5 pellets every 20 to 30 minutes as needed. Use Ipechach-uana if the scours are bloody. If there is a fever, then administer BoviSera and /or 1cc of Immunoboost. Other suggestions were: Add fennel, chamomile, cinnamon, and ginger to aid digestion and reduce pathogenic bacteria. Feed Dynamine (mineral mix from Agri-Dynamics). Feed yoghurt and/or sauerkraut for the beneficial bacteria. Give the clostridium antibody product from Colorado Serum Company.

A producer with a closed herd stopped vaccinating his cows (except for Lepto) about 10 years ago. This year, a strain of pneumonia

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### Website & E-Newsletter Advertising

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

#### Website Advertising

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

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

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

#### E-Newsletter Advertising

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

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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](http://www.nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml)

# Calendar

**June 6, 2015 10:00 am – 1:00 pm**

**Farming with Beneficial Insects: Organic Pest Control**

Rodale Institute, 611 Siegfriedale Road, Kutztown, PA, 19530

Kelly Gill of the Xerces Society will discuss “Conservation Biological Control”, a strategy that seeks to integrate beneficial insects back into crop systems for natural pest control. The workshop will cover: The importance of beneficial insects – predators and parasitoids that attack insect pests; recognizing the habitat needs of beneficial insects; designing and implementing habitat improvements: native plant restoration, insectary plantings, beetle banks, and overwintering habitat; the current best management practices that minimize land-use impacts on beneficial insects and mitigate exposure to insecticides; and discuss how current Farm Bill conservation programs can be used to get financial and technical support for beneficial insect habitat.

Visit: <http://rodaleinstitute.org/event-registration/?ee=143> or call 610-683-1400 for more information.

**June 3rd - 8th, 2015**

**Widen Your World with Dowsing:**

**The 55th National Convention**

Lyndon State College in Lyndonville, Vermont

Saturday Keynote Speaker is Stephan A. Schwartz, author of *Opening to the Infinite*; Sunday Keynote is Dowser Aaron Singleton, certified master hypnotherapist, inventor, visionary and founder of “The Energy of Life Healing Process”. The conference also features: Two-day Basic and One-day Advanced Dowsing Schools for everyone from the beginner to the proficient; Two-day Water Dowsing Course, taught by some of ASD’s finest water dowers.

For more information, visit <http://dowsers.org/conferences-2/national-convention-2.html>

**June 10, 2015**

**FarmStarts – Beginning Farmers Explore Production, Business and Marketing**

Alexandria, Minnesota

Funded by USDA – NIFA, this program is designed to help beginning farmers learn more about organic dairy and organic grain production. Open to conventional and organic producers, workshops cover grain marketing, farm structure and budgeting, fertility and weed control, certification rules, and more. To learn more visit: <http://www.nfo.org/FarmStarts/index.htm>

**June 17, 2015**

**MAKING MILK ON GRASS**

Stone Mill Dairy, 5626 Reservoir Road, Earlville, NY 13332  
11:00am-3:30pm (Lunch provided)

Join NOFA NY, Organic Valley CROPP Cooperative and David

*continued on page 38*

## UPCOMING WEBINARS

**‘Tools for Transitioning to Organic Dairy’ Webinar**

**Tuesday, May 19, 2015, 10-11:30 am**

For those who work with dairies interested in becoming organic producers and farmers considering the transition. Presentations will cover the requirements for organic certification, tools to adjust conventional farming practices to meet those requirements, and the types of federal loans and Environmental Quality Incentives Program Organic Initiative resources that can help with transition costs. Other topics include how to develop an Organic System Plan, spreadsheets for figuring the cost of transitioning cropland, other tools for making the switch to organic dairy crops production, and return on investment data.

The webinar is targeted at informing and equipping Extension and agribusiness educators, NY FarmNet counselors, bankers and other dairy industry personnel to help farmers interested in transitioning to organic dairy production, but farmers are also welcome to participate in the webinar. There will be time for questions and answers. To register for the May 19 webinar, use the link at <http://blogs.comell.edu/organicdairyinitiative/> by 4pm on May 18. For more details, contact Fay Benson at 607-753-5213.

**USDA-NRCS Soil Health Webinar: The Relevance of Soil Biology in Assessing Fertility and Soil Health**

You can view this archived webinar at any time by going to [www.solvita.com](http://www.solvita.com) (1 hour in length)

Webinar Format: Participants will learn how soil biology directly and indirectly influence crop growth and nutrient cycling, along with methods for measuring biological activity in soil and interpreting soil respiration to understand nutrient availability.

**Webinar: Fencing: Getting it Right\*\* with Randy Cutler**

**Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2015**

Time: 7pm CST / 8pm EST. Duration: 90 minutes. Cost: Free!

To register, go to: <https://www.anymeeting.com/AccountManager/RegEv.aspx?PID=EB57D983834F3B>

Discover the ins and outs of fencing for livestock: planning, placement, and practicality of making fence. You’ll learn about fence types, mental and physical barriers, resources, costs, and preparation. You’ll also get to see how to use various fencing materials.

\*\*The Fund-A-Farmer Project (formerly Healthy & Humane Farm Funds Project) is a project of Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT). FACT offers free webinars and an online forum for humane farmers. Please join us to expand your farming knowledge and to share your experiences with other farmers!

**June 2, 2015, 2 p.m.**

**Webinar: Mitigating Soil Disturbance in Organic Systems**

Join Oregon Tilth and NRCS to learn more about practices that can offset the negative impacts of tillage. Giulio Feruzzi will discuss production practices that can offset the negative impacts of tillage in organic systems, including the use of cover crops, compost and other additions of organic matter. For more information: <http://tilth.org/event/mitigating-soil-disturbance-in-organic-systems/>

**June 17, 2015, 1 p.m. Central**

**Environmental Benefits of Organic Agriculture: Biodiversity (Free)**

Presented by NRCS and Oregon Tilth, learn about the biodiversity benefits of organic farming practices. This session will present scientific research examining the biodiversity benefits of organic farming practices in temperate and tropical farm systems. For more information go to:

<http://www.conservationwebinars.net/webinars/environmental-benefits-of-organic-agriculture-biodiversity>



## ODAIRY DISCUSSIONS

*continued from page 34*

appeared, affecting 14 younger cows at the time. He kept the fever down with aspirin and Homeopathics, and gave saline and dextrose IV's. He asked the group about their thoughts on the pros and cons of regular vaccination. Another producer felt that vaccination was an essential preventative. A vet said that he really liked the intranasal vaccines; they are good for 3 to 4 months. He suggested Spirovac as a leptovaccine as it is good for about 18 months, much longer than other leptovaccines. For best protection when using injectable vaccines, open animals should be given a modified live vaccine once a year; bred animals should be given a killed vaccine.

Quite a long discussion was started when a farmer asked the group for sources of selenium, vitamin C, and copper sulfate. Two sources of yeast-derived selenium were suggested: Selplex 2000 and AllTech. For reproductive uses, the injectable MuSe was recommended. Vitamin C is available from any veterinarian. Several farmers cautioned the farmer on the use of copper sulfate, since it can be toxic. It was suggested that it never be fed free-choice; a little goes a very long way. For use on hooves, one vet said it burns when applied to a lesion as a powder. He suggested the use of hydrated lime in a dry, walk-through box;

and farms with hoof issues could try a good mineral mix for hoof health (he suggested Zinpro). For actual hoof treatment, he suggested a mixture of ½ cup sugar with 20cc betadine applied as a paste to the hoof, then wrapped. Another producer offered that it was better to fertilize the pastures to correct nutrient deficiencies. He reminded us that too much lime or nitrogen can contribute to copper deficiency in pastures. Another producer recommended Ferro as a better source of copper.

*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.*

## ODAIRY INDUSTRY NEWS

### Free Speech

*continued from page 7*

because it disparages other form of production and USDA maintains that organic certification is not a claim about content – only about a production method

- Check-off funds cannot be used to say that organic products are healthier for you, have superior animal welfare practices, and better for the environment because this contrast disparages other forms of production as being bad for you and the environment

In essence, the USDA simply sees the organic seal as just another marketing label for production practices and will not allow messages about whether or not those production practices are superior or the food produced by those practices is better.

This means that check-off funds will not be able run ads saying: "If a family wants to wisely spend their dollars on meaningful labels, they should buy certified organic," says Urvashi Rangan, Senior Scientist & Policy Analyst at Consumers Union.

The OTA and organic food and agriculture supporters are now able to say that "Organic is the Gold Standard." But even this simple and accurate message will not be allowed when using organic check-off funds, as the other commodity producers will object.

A recent remark from a key official in the American Soybean Association makes their concerns clear: "For retailers to talk about one production system over another as being the gold standard disparages the production system I use, and I don't think that's conducive to having a conversation about coexistence," said Ron Moore, who grows soybeans, corn and alfalfa near Roseville, Ill., and serves as secretary of the American Soybean Association. [Anti-GMO, Biotech Factions Clash at Food Summit, The Wall Street Journal, 3/12/15]

## Advertise With Us!

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

Join as a **Business Member** and receive an additional 5% off all advertising. To learn more about Business memberships and the Web Business Directory, go to [www.nodpa.com/directory.shtml](http://www.nodpa.com/directory.shtml) or contact Nora Owens.

**2015 Ad rates and sizes listed below.**

**Deadline for advertising in the  
July, 2015 issue is June 15, 2015.**

**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:  
(3.5" W x 2.25" H) = \$90**

**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](mailto:noraowens@comcast.net).

Please send a check with your ad (made payable to NODPA).  
30 Keets Rd., Deerfield, MA 01342

## 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](http://nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml)); visit our web page ([www.nodpa.com](http://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.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$40 to cover an annual subscription to NODPA news

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_ \$100 to become a supporter of NODPA

\_\_\_\_\_ \$1,000+ to become a Benefactor

\_\_\_\_\_ \$150 to become a Business Member

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a certified organic dairy producer? YES NO

Number of milking cows \_\_\_\_\_

Milk buyer \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please mail this form with a check to: Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director, 30 Keets Rd, Deerfield, MA 01342, or by fax: 866-554-9483 or by email to [ednodpa@comcast.net](mailto: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: \_\_\_\_\_

## CALENDAR

*continued from page 35*

Stratton of Stone Mill Dairy to learn more about managing a grass based dairy. David Stratton will share what makes his farm successful including pasture management, calf-raising and milk quality in a no-grain system. Karen Hoffman, NRCS Animal Scientist will discuss the intricacies of grass based nutrition while DVM, Guy Jodarski, expands on maintaining herd health. Learn from Troy Bishopp, Grazing Specialist for Madison County Soil and Water, on pasture planning and using a grazing chart to aid in pasture management. Registration Instructions: To pre-register and pay, go online or call Stephanie at 585-271-1979 ext. 509. The field day is \$15/person or \$25/2 or more people per farm. Pre-registration closes at 4pm on June 15th.

**June 17-19, 2015**

### **Midwest Farm Energy Conference**

Morris, Minnesota

This conference at the University of Minnesota's West Central Research and Outreach Center will address energy-optimized systems for dairy production and energy conservation and generation in swine facilities. It will provide practical information for agricultural producers, networking with energy experts, and renewable energy bus tours. Questions regarding the conference should be directed to:

Michael Reese, 320- 589-1711 or reesem@morris.umn.edu

**June 18, 2015**

### **Ready to Roll? New Field Research on Organic No-Till Soybean with Rolled-Crimped Cover Crops**

Musgrave Research Farm, 1256 Poplar Ridge Rd, Aurora, NY 13026 6:00pm-8:00pm

Want to reduce your spring tillage? We will demonstrate equipment for successfully rolling down cover crops and planting soybeans into the resulting mulch; plus field plots will show results of several different rolling dates and cover crop species. This is a viable way to save money and time, while improving your soil! Join Matt Ryan, Brian Caldwell, Jeff Liebert, Christopher Pelzer and other Cornell Researchers at this twilight meeting held at a Cornell University research farm. Registration Details: To pre-register and pay online or call Stephanie at 585-271-1979 ext. 509. The fees are \$15/person or \$25 for two or more people/farm. Pre-registration is encouraged and closes at 4pm on 6/16/15.

**June 27, 2015 - June 28 2015, Saturday and Sunday, 9am-4pm**  
**Women in Farming — Weekend Intensive**  
**Just Roots, Greenfield, MA**

This weekend-long intensive is for women, by women. You will learn skills on power tools and basic building projects that are agriculture related. You will also get an intensive 101 on chainsaw work, repair and safety, as well as tractor work, repair and safety. Come with your own equipment in mind or with questions on future plans. The course runs Saturday and Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Greenfield Community Farm, Greenfield, MA. Contact education coordinator Annie Burdett, at annie@

justroots.org for details or call 413-325-8969.

**June 30, 2015 9:00 am**

### **How to Improve Soil with Grazing-Ian Mitchell-Innes Field Day** John Meulenberg's Farm, 667 Puseyville Road, Kirkwood, PA

Field day topics include: Increasing milk production with grazing techniques, maximizing the amount of energy consumed by the animal through vegetative growth management, managing soil surface and stocking density toward sustained grass growth; understanding and managing soil life; realizing fungal/ bacterial relationships. To register: Register before June 20th for \$75 per person, \$60 for each additional person from same household. After June 20th, registration is \$100 per person. To pre-register: Mail check payable to Lancaster County Graziers to 1142 Gap Road Kinzers, PA 17535. Include name, address, phone number, and number attending. Questions? Text or call 717-278-1070, or email romans@springwood-farm.com

**July 17-19, 2015**

### **2015 Seed Saver Exchange Conference & Campout**

Heritage Farm, Decorah, IA

Connecting the best minds in food, gardens, & seed saving. They come together to discuss issues involving seed and food security as well as the best practices for growing, harvesting, and storing food and seed crops and ways to connect with other seed savers across the nation and world. For more information call: 563-382-5990 or visit [www.seedsavers.org/Annual-Conference-registration.html](http://www.seedsavers.org/Annual-Conference-registration.html)

**July 30, 2015**

### **2015 Kneading Conference**

Skowhegan State Fairgrounds, Madison Avenue  
 Skowhegan, ME 04976

The flagship event of the Maine Grain Alliance, the Kneading Conference brings farmers, millers, and bakers together for two days of educational workshops and hands-on learning to preserve and promote grain traditions, from earth to hearth. For more information, email [Rachel@mainegrainalliance.com](mailto:Rachel@mainegrainalliance.com).

**Wednesday, August 5, 2015**

### **2015 Soil Health Train-the-Trainer Workshop**

Emerson Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca NY

This intensive training workshop focuses on measuring and improving soil health through holistic, adaptive, and data-driven soil management. The target audience is professionals working with agricultural or urban soil management issues. This workshop will include a mix of in-depth classroom training, hands-on field and laboratory experiences, and opportunities to work with national and international colleagues. There will be an optional field trip to discuss soil health practices, field assessment of soil health status, and appropriate management options. Participants will learn about soil health principles, analysis, reporting, interpretation, and management from experts.

There is an optional Saturday August 8th field trip. Registration information available at <http://www.cvent.com/d/rrqlts/4W?RefID=1>

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### From the MODPA Treasurer

**A**s I write this we are enduring a thunderstorm. The smell of fresh rain is right up there with the first pasture grass of the season. It is a smell and feeling that is heavenly to me; but enough of preaching to the choir. This spring in the Upper Midwest has been much kinder so far than the last two; we were due for a good spring. Two years ago we got blasted with snow in early May, and last year the rain started in late April and did not stop until the 4th of July. Hopefully, this year will be more to the normal side of the equation.

Milk continues to be tight by all accounts. The coming of the pasture season will bring some flush but I don't think it will be enough to build any long term surplus. I think it will be curtailed some by last year's mediocre feed that was used through the winter. It would be good if we could all self-balance the supply and have very little spring flush. There continues to be good competition for organic milk in my area. This is a good thing for us as farmers, but it would be nice if we could get coordinated enough as farmers to have more control than the processors. We cannot afford to have too many more years where they throw what they want in the trough and we have to take what is there. If we cannot be profitable they will not be profitable in the long run, either. Last time I checked there wasn't an abundance of farmers out there so unlike pro sports their draft picks are fairly limited. We also need to make sure we get a system in place to encourage the next generation to want to farm, too. Too many children have left the farm seeing how hard Mom and Dad work for so little. They need to see some positive in all of this. Not just bust your back and other parts of your body and die. We can't count on our leaders to get this done for us so we must take it upon

ourselves to get the job done. If there is a group of people who can do this it is farmers. We are all used to doing it, we just have to make sure we do it right for the future generations. I come from a time when our milk was all consumed locally not shipped half way across the country because the farm communities have been destroyed by the get big or get out mentality. The logo for the first processor I recall was that the milk was never more than 3 days old. It truly was fresh and the system was efficient with the milk coming from a 100 mile radius. I think this will be the future. They say everything old is "New".

The proposed check off continues to make the news. No details seem to get to those who will likely be stuck with the bill for it. I have not seen anything to make me change my mind about it so if you think you have some insider info I would be glad to review it. Seems like another hand in my pocket with no guarantee that it will be better for me. The check offs that I have seen over the years have not been kind to farmers. If they did what they claimed they were going to do there would likely be a waiting list of farmers, not a mass exodus.

I wish you all a safe and productive start to the season. May you all have plenty of blessings this year. And please remember to take the time to smell the roses and get your rest. You are no good if you are tired or worse yet you get hurt because of lack of rest. Put yourself first once a week. Remember, I am pulling for you.

**Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer**  
**3253 150th Avenue, Glenwood City, WI 54013**  
**715-265-4431**

### 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.

### MODPA Board

#### Wisconsin

Darlene Coehoorn, President  
 Viewpoint Acres Farm  
 N5878 Hwy C, Rosendale, WI 54974  
 ddviewpoint@yahoo.com  
 Phone: 920-921-5541

Jim Greenberg, Vice-President  
 EP 3961 Drake Avenue  
 Stratford, WI 54484  
 greenbfirms@tznnet.com  
 Phone: 715-687-8147

Bruce Drinkman, Treasurer  
 3253 150th Avenue  
 Glenwood City, WI 54013  
 bdrinkman@hotmail.com  
 Phone: 715-265-4431

John Kiefer, Director  
 S10698 Troy Rd, Sauk City, WI 53583  
 taofarmer@direcway.com  
 Phone: 608-544-3702

#### Jim Small, Director

26548 Locust Ave.  
 Wilton, WI 54670  
 Tel: 608-435-6700

#### Iowa

Andy Schaefer, Director  
 25037 Lake Rd  
 Garnavillo, IA 52049  
 Tel: 563-964-2758

#### Michigan

Ed Zimba, Zimba Dairy  
 7995 Mushroom Rd  
 DeFord, MI 48729  
 zimbadaairy@tband.net  
 Phone: 989-872-2680

#### Ohio

Ernest Martin, Director  
 1720 Crum Rd  
 Shiloh, OH 44878  
 Phone and Fax: 419-895-1182

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

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

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**CALENDAR**

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**August 14-15, 2015, The Northeast Organic Farming  
Association (NOFA) Summer Conference**  
UMass Amherst, Amherst, MA

The Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) Summer Conference takes place August 14-15, 2015 at UMass Amherst in Massachusetts. This year, among the pre-conference offerings will be an all-day seminar on Friday, August 14, given by 2015 keynoter Natasha Campbell-McBride, on the healing potential of food for overcoming chronic illness. This is an event for the whole family: Music, dance, films, games, animal rides, and meet-ups. There's a modest registration, inexpensive dorm rooms, camping and delicious, wholesome organic meals. The phone number for the NOFA Summer Conference Registration Coordinator, Christine Rainville, is (508) 572-0816. Visit the conference webpage at:

<http://www.nofasummerconference.org/program.php>

**September 16-18, 2015, Generations of Opportunity: Sun and  
Water, Sons and Daughters**  
Mt. Pleasant, MI

Mark your calendars for the 2015 conference. Grass-fed beef was once a niche. It's now one of the most exciting stars in beef production and demand for grass fed beef continues to rise as more and more people join this growing movement.

The purpose of this event is to help producers grow in knowledge of the grass-fed industry and in finishing cattle specifically. Our desire is to help producers understand the possibilities for finishing cattle correctly on grass to produce the best quality grass fed beef possible. We also desire to create a consistency of beef quality within the industry. For information about the conference or to register by phone contact: Kathy Richburg, 256-996-3142, [info@grassfedexchange.com](mailto:info@grassfedexchange.com)

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