

# NODPA News

## Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

July 2018

Volume 18, Issue 4

WWW.NODPA.COM

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE: Organic Industry News

Dairy Farm Profitability	1
From the NODPA President	2
From the NODPA Desk	3
August: A Good Time to Plant	10
NOSB Meeting in Tucson	14
Feed & Pay Prices	16
2018 NODPA Field Days:	
September 27/28	
SAVE THE DATE!	19
September Educational Events	12

### Organic Production

Jefferson, Maryland	1
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### Net Update

Online Ad Opportunities	26
Subscribing To ODairy	26

### Member Info

Calendar	35
Support NODPA Through	
Milk Check-Off	
NODPA News Subscription	37
From the MODPA Desk	38



Adam bringing the cows in for milking

### FEATURED FARM: HOLTERHOLM FARMS, JEFFERSON, MARYLAND

“No salesmen come down this driveway anymore,” said Organic Valley dairy farmer Ron Holter. “They know not to bother us. We haven’t bought seed in twenty years.”

Ron is the 5th generation to farm on Holt-

erholm Farms located in Jefferson, MD, in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in southwestern Frederick County, Maryland. He and his son, Adam, farm together full-time. The farm was certified organic in 2005. Drive 13 miles to the southwest

*continued on page 28*

### Vermont Organic Dairy Farm Profitability 2016

*By Jon Walsh, MS Candidate, University of Vermont, Department of Community Development and Applied Economics*

**2018** marked a sad year for the Vermont agricultural community with the passing of Extension Economist Bob Parsons. As part of his legacy UVM, along with NOFA VT, is working to continue with the ongoing organic dairy profitability study. This article provides a summary of the 2016 data collected by Bob and the rest

of the study team.

For the year 2016, 35 Vermont organic dairy farms participated in the study. All farms have been certified organic for at least 2 years, with some over 15 years. The smallest farm in the study milked 26 cows and the largest milked 145. The average

*continued on page 4*

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Message from the NODPA President Message from the President

**A**s I write this, Mother Nature is doing her bit for the nation's oversupply of milk by blanketing the Northeast in a blistering week of heat and humidity. Both the cows and the farmers in my area are not used to these temperatures, so are functioning a bit below normal. The only life forms that seem to be at peak performance are the flies.

A quick drive around my area reveals different strategies that farmers employ when these conditions occur: There are the farmers that keep their cows inside during the heat of the day, trying to keep them cool in the barn with fans. There are the farmers that move the cows out to the pastures that have the most shade, or feed them round bales in the woods. They double-check the water systems and free-choice salt stations.

And then, amazingly, there are those who just hope for the best, and make no change to their routine: these cows just cluster together near a water trough in the sun for the day. And I can't help thinking that this is a metaphor for how we as farmers deal with larger challenges.

Those of us that supply the major processors have coped with production restrictions and significant pay price reductions in 2017. And although most have seen a loosening of production "quotas" in the first half of 2018, our price remains at the same level. Organic dairy farmers argue among themselves whether this current price is "at" the cost of production or "below" the cost of production. We worry about our neighbors who are on the edge, and know of farms that tell us privately that they are "done" as soon as the feed is gone or their contract ends. It is clear that we are ALL trying to weather the storm.

This has been a long storm, and I know there have been different strategies employed on farms across the country. How have you

*continued on page 34*

#### Board Members & Representatives

##### PENNSYLVANIA

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

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

**Dwight Stoltzfoos, Board Secretary**  
Spring Wood Organic Farm  
1143 Gap Road  
Kinzers, PA 17535  
info@springwooddairy.com

##### VIRGINIA

**Rodney Martin, State Rep**  
Bridge View Dairy  
2773 Fadley Road  
bridgewater, VA 22812-2711

##### NEW YORK

**Kirk Arnold, NODPA Vice President**  
3175 State Route 13  
Truxton, NY 13158-3107  
kickaha21@gmail.com  
P: 607-842-6631

**Liz Bawden, President, Newsletter Contributor, Associate Editor**  
119 Factory Rd., Hammond, NY 13646  
bawden@cit-tele.com  
Phone: 315-324-6926

**Ryan Murray, Board Member**  
6000 Cheningo Solon Pond Rd.  
Truxton NY 13158  
rcmdairy@gmail.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

**Brian Wilson, State Rep**  
Morningside Farm, 101 Hemenway Hill Rd, Shoreham, VT 05770  
Cell phone: 802-377-1786,  
bpwilson@shoreham.net

**Jeep Madison, State Rep**  
2806 Smith Street, Shoreham, VT 05770  
Cell: 802-349-6262  
jojoselixir@yahoo.com

**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, Board Member**  
**Policy Committee Chair**  
159 Atkinson Rd, Charleston, ME 04422  
smccrest@gmail.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

**Sean Mallett, WODPA President**  
seanmallett@msn.com

**Henry Perkins, Past President,**  
Box 156 Bog Rd., Albion, ME 04910  
Phone: 207-437-9279  
henryperkins51@gmail.com

**NODPA Policy Committee**  
**Chair Kathie Arnold**  
3175 NYS Rt. 13, Truxton, NY 13158  
kathiearnold@gmail.com  
Phone: 607-842-6631  
Fax: 607-842-6557

**Cecelia Murray, Policy Committee**  
Bundy Creek Farm LLC  
5229 Cheningo Road  
Truxton, NY 13158-3118  
cecelmurr@aol.com

#### 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: July 2018

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

It's no coincidence that Liz Bawden and I start our columns with the same topic – the weather. Without any real spring, June has come and gone and with it the brutally hot weather where we had temperature in the high 90's for a week without any lowering of the pressure at night. This unusual weather not only puts strains on people and animals but also equipment. With a low pay price and shortage of cash flow, many producers have skipped essential maintenance on equipment and facilities with subsequent problems when they are tested at their maximum capacity in excessive hot weather. Similarly, there may be a need to purchase supplemental feed as dry conditions persist. All you need at the end of a hot day are maxed out credit cards and lender credit, plus an already negotiated 'holiday' from debt service, and then need a part for a cooler whose purchase you know will cause bounced checks. The Northeast is in the middle of a housing boom so any appraisal of farm property will be higher and allow for increased credit with higher interest rates. Short term relief is based on an assumption that pay price will increase and be able service higher debt. This issue of NODPA News includes the next chapter in the reporting of organic dairy profitability in New England and specifically Vermont. The work of Bob Parsons and Lisa McCrory since 2004 is now being carried forward, and in this issue we publish the 2016 results of how profitable dairy was in 2016. If milk buyers, processors and the organic community want a geographically and operationally diverse milk supply they need to seek a pay price that addresses cost of production on small to mid-size operations that make up the majority of domestic organic dairy farms.

As Congress heads out for its shortened summer break, they will leave behind a conference committee working on merging the House and Senate versions of the 2018 Farm Bill. The largest gap between the two versions is not tied to production agriculture but with food insecurity and poverty policy because the House version contains controversial proposed changes to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Where a combined version of the two bills will affect organic dairy is with proposed changes to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB). The House Bill includes three statutory reforms to the NOSB that are unnecessary and weaken the authority of the NOSB. The Senate bill includes an unnecessary and redundant statutory addition to the NOSB section of the Organic Foods Production Act regarding the voting procedures used by the NOSB for reviewing and approving materials for use in organic. The House Bill will make it acceptable for non-farmers to take NOSB seats allocated to farmers; inserts a loophole that will bypass the NOSB role in deciding on synthetics in organic handling; and bypassing the

NOSB in any decisions regarding materials that have been approved by FDA or EPA for use in agricultural production or food processing and handling. The Senate "codifies the requirement for an amendment to the National List to be a decisive vote that requires 2/3 of the votes cast at a meeting of the National Organic Standards Board at which a quorum is present." While the role of the NOSB is continually being downgraded by the USDA, these changes to the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990, which is the basis of the interaction with the Federal government, will permanently undermine the integrity of the organic regulations with consumers and producers. The uniqueness of the third party certification backed by federal enforcement but with a citizen advisory Board with regulatory power over what inputs can go into organic makes the organic seal stand out against the plethora of other labels and add-ons that result in a very confused consumer.

Other important areas of the conference committee are: maintaining a reasonable level of funding for the successful Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI); funding Organic Certification Cost-Share Assistance; increasing USDA's ability to ensure effective organic import oversight and enforcement; requires USDA to develop a national strategic germplasm and cultivar collection assessment; require the National Genetic Resources Advisory Committee (NGRAC) to do an assessment of needs related to public cultivar development; and to make recommendations to the Secretary regarding funding gaps, plus requiring the Secretary to designate 4 seats on the NGRAC for members with public cultivar and animal breed development expertise; and maintenance of the organic provision in conservation programs, crop insurance and risk management. While the investment in dollars in organic programs is relatively small, it is important to stress to your representatives and senators the importance of them especially for small to mid-size operations.

Those of you that took the time to comment on GE Food labeling propose regulation, thank you.

Having read many comments, I think we should turn to a food cooperative that has 250,000 people shopping at their stores. Below is the summary from the comment submitted by PCC Community Markets who owns 11 stores, generating nearly \$280 million in annual sales:

"The National Bioengineered Food Disclosure Standard is an opportunity for the United States to grow our agricultural economy and expand trade with a rule that meets global expectations and U.S. consumer needs. As a consumer-owned grocer, we appreciate the work by many committed USDA staff to create these regulations. We urge USDA to adopt a GE food labeling rule that honors the consumers' need for familiar, understandable terms and symbols and that will provide transparent on-package disclosure, ingredient by ingredient, when produced with genetic engineering."

**Stay cool and calm and carry-on! ♦**



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# Vermont Organic Dairy Farm Profitability 2016

*By Jon Walsh, MS Candidate, University of Vermont, Department of  
Community Development and Applied Economics*

*continued from page 1*

number of cows per farm was 64.1.

Profitability analysis of the 2016 data shows that the average Return on Assets (ROA) for farms in the study remained similar to the previous two years at 1.88% (compared with 1.71% in 2015 and 1.81% in 2014). Milk prices were also very similar to 2015, with an average price per hundredweight received of \$35.58/cwt (compared with \$35.59/cwt in 2015). This relatively high price did not last long into 2017, and next year's data will certainly reflect lower prices and decreased ROA.

In 2016, however, organic dairy operations did much better than similarly sized conventional farms. Data from the 2016 NEDF survey shows that small conventional farms (68 cows per farm) had an average ROA of -.08% with an average received milk price of \$16.69/cwt.

In terms of milk production, farms in the study produced an average of 13,717 lbs per cow, far below the 20,679 lbs per cow achieved by small conventional New England dairies. These numbers are both similar to the 2015 data.

## Revenues and Expenses

The average farm in the 2016 study earned a total of \$369,928 in cash receipts, with \$345,167 coming from milk sales and \$13,612 from cow and calf sales. At \$3,824 dairy cow sales did not change much from 2015. Other important sources of income included crop sales and syrup production (on 13 and 6 farms respectively). In terms of expenses, the highest category was purchased feed, with the average farm spending \$93,194 on grain and concentrates and \$18,305 on purchased forages. As in previous years, repairs and supplies were the next biggest expense at \$45,174, followed by \$41,495 in depreciation and \$34,886 in labor costs. Another important cost assumed by this particular study is \$38,000 for operator labor and management. On an accrual basis, 13 of the farms in the study did not earn enough to cover this implied expense, although 8 of these farms also received off-farm income not counted in the farm profitability assessment.

On a per cow basis, farms in the study had higher expenses than similar sized conventional dairy farms (\$5,050 vs. \$4,224), but also received higher revenues (\$5,878 vs. \$4,465). In 2016 organic feed costs were \$1,741 per cow vs. \$1,197 con-

ventional, repairs and supplies were \$705 vs. \$657, labor was \$545 vs. \$292, and depreciation was \$655 vs. \$539.

Some costs were actually lower on organic farms per cow, including veterinary and medical expenses, fertilizers, fuel, and seed costs. Subtracting costs from revenues, organic farms in this study earned \$587 more per cow than similarly sized conventional farms. In 2016, much as in 2015, high organic milk prices more than compensated for higher per cow expenses. While the milk price did not change, revenue per cow increased by \$192 while expenses also increased by \$275 from 2015 to 2016, meaning that per cow revenue decreased by \$83 in 2016.

All of the above analysis should be tempered by the fact that most conventional dairy farms are far larger than organic farms, with an average of 403 cows per farm, meaning that many of the above per cow estimates for small conventional farms do not hold true for the industry as a whole.

## Organic Dairy Profitability Cluster Analysis

In order to draw conclusions about what it is that makes a dairy farm financially successful, it is useful to divide farms into groups based on their profitability level. Compared with 2015, variation in profitability across these groups increased somewhat in 2016. The highest profitability group had an average ROA of 7.45%, far above the conventional industry average of 1.1% ROA. The mid profitability group matched the conventional average ROA at 1.1%. This group is staying afloat but not performing any better than conventional farms (though they are achieving this result with far fewer cows on average). The low profitability group achieved an ROA of -3.34, slightly better than 2015 but still unsustainable in the long term.

Unsurprisingly, farms in the highly profitable group had more cows on average at 78.6 (14.5 above the study average of 64.1). Pounds milk shipped per cow was somewhat higher on these farms, but at \$14,421 was only 700 pounds per cow above the study average of \$13,717. The combination of these two factors had a strong effect on total farm revenue, with the high

*continued on page 6*  
profitability farms bringing in an average of \$488,101 com-

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## VERMONT ORGANIC RESULTS

BOB PARSONS 802-656-2109 bob.parsons@uvm.edu University of Vermont Extension

2016 Vermont Organic  
Dairy Farms Averages (N=35)

	Per Farm	Per Cow	Per Cwt
Average # of cows	64.1	64.1	64.1
Lbs shipped total	901,058	901,058	901,058
Lbs shipped/cow	13,717	13,717	13,717
Milk price	\$38.58	\$38.58	\$38.58
<b>Receipts</b>			
Milk sales (a)	345,167	5,388	38.58
Dairy cattle sales	3,824	60	0.42
Cull cow sales	8,493	133	0.94
Bob/Weal calf sales	1,295	20	0.14
Crop sales	1,948	30	0.22
Government payments	2,042	32	0.23
Patronage dividends	2,799	44	0.31
Custom work	412	6	0.05
Syrup	1,183	18	0.13
Timber	170	3	0.02
Other	2,595	41	0.29
<b>Total Cash Receipts (b)</b>	<b>\$369,928</b>	<b>\$5,775</b>	<b>\$41.05</b>
<b>Accrual Revenue Adjustments</b>			
Livestock inventory	5,208	81	0.58
Breeding livestock purchases	(1,608)	(25)	(0.18)
Accounts receivable (c)	2,178	34	0.24
Hay	764	12	0.08
Grain	81	1	0.01
<b>Total Accrual Revenue (d)</b>	<b>\$6,622</b>	<b>\$103</b>	<b>\$0.73</b>
<b>Total Farm Revenue (e)</b>	<b>\$376,550</b>	<b>\$5,878</b>	<b>\$41.79</b>
<b>Expenses</b>			
Auto and truck expenses	1,799	28	0.20
Bedding	9,709	152	1.08
Breeding	3,385	53	0.38
Chemicals/pesticides	25	0	0.00
Custom hire:	15,027	235	1.67
DHIA	1,261	20	0.14
Fertilizers & lime	4,287	67	0.48
Feed - purchased grain & other	93,194	1,455	10.34
Feed - purchased forage	18,305	286	2.03
Fuel and Oil	7,207	113	0.80
Insurance	5,289	83	0.59
Interest	8,093	126	0.90
Labor	34,886	545	3.87
Milk Marketing	4,738	74	0.53

	Per Farm	Per Cow	Per Cwt
Real estate taxes (farm portion)	4,553	71	0.51
Rent	5,223	82	0.58
Repairs	26,121	408	2.90
Seed and plants	1,198	19	0.13
Supplies	19,053	297	2.11
Utilities	10,841	169	1.20
Vet	3,177	50	0.35
Miscellaneous	5,057	79	0.56
<b>Total Cash Expenses (f)</b>	<b>\$282,426</b>	<b>\$4,409</b>	<b>\$31.34</b>
<b>Accrual Expense Adjustments</b>			
Depreciation	41,945	655	4.66
Accounts payable	(966)	(15)	(0.11)
Pre-paid expenses	437	7	0.05
Supplies	(353)	(6)	(0.04)
<b>Total Accrual Expenses (g)</b>	<b>\$41,063</b>	<b>\$641</b>	<b>\$4.56</b>
<b>Total Farm Expenses (h)</b>	<b>\$323,490</b>	<b>\$5,050</b>	<b>\$35.90</b>
<b>Cash Income from Milk (a-f)</b>	<b>\$62,740</b>	<b>\$979</b>	<b>\$6.96</b>
<b>Accrual Income from Milk (a+g-f)</b>	<b>\$23,855</b>	<b>\$372</b>	<b>\$2.65</b>
<b>Milk Income over Feed Costs</b>	<b>\$233,668</b>	<b>\$3,648</b>	<b>\$25.93</b>
<b>Net Cash Farm Income (b-f)</b>	<b>\$87,501</b>	<b>\$1,366</b>	<b>\$9.71</b>
<b>Net Farm Revenue (e-h)</b>	<b>\$53,060</b>	<b>\$828</b>	<b>\$5.89</b>
<b>Family Living (i)</b>	<b>\$38,000</b>	<b>\$593</b>	<b>\$4.22</b>
<b>Net Cash Farm Earnings (b-f-i)</b>	<b>\$49,501</b>	<b>\$773</b>	<b>\$5.49</b>
<b>Net Farm Earnings (e-h-i)</b>	<b>\$15,060</b>	<b>\$235</b>	<b>\$1.67</b>
<b>Off Farm Income (j)</b>	<b>\$14,462</b>	<b>\$226</b>	<b>\$1.61</b>
<b>Net Family Cash Earnings (b-f-i+j)</b>	<b>\$63,964</b>	<b>\$999</b>	<b>\$7.10</b>
<b>Net Earnings (e-h-i+j)</b>	<b>\$29,522</b>	<b>\$461</b>	<b>\$3.28</b>
<b>Average Assets</b>	<b>\$1,076,185</b>	<b>\$16,800</b>	<b>\$119.44</b>
<b>Average Equity</b>	<b>\$845,250</b>	<b>\$13,195</b>	<b>\$93.81</b>
<b>Return on Assets</b>	<b>1.88%</b>	<b>1.88%</b>	<b>1.88%</b>
<b>Return on Equity</b>	<b>1.88%</b>	<b>1.88%</b>	<b>1.88%</b>

Sincere thanks to cooperating farmers and NOFA-VT in producing this summary. Financial supporters include Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Stonyfield Farm, Organic Valley/Cropp, Whitewave/Horizon Lakeview Organic Grain, Yankee Farm Credit, Green Mt. Feeds, and Morrison Custom Feeds.

continued on page 6

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Vermont Organic Dairy Farm Profitability 2016

*continued from page 5*

## GROUP RESULTS PER COW

BOB PARSONS 802-656-2109 bob.parsons@uvm.edu University of Vermont Extension

2016 Vermont Organic  
Dairy Farms Averages (N=35)  
Reported by Profitability Group  
Per Cow



	Bottom Third N=11	Middle Third N=12	Top Third N=12	All Farms Per Farm
Average # of cows	65.6	48.1	78.6	64.1
Lbs shipped total	855,694	680,501	1,163,200	901,058
Lbs shipped/cow	12,516	14,112	14,421	13,717
Milk price	\$38.08	\$38.68	\$38.95	\$38.58
<b>Receipts</b>				
Milk sales (a)	4,687	5,442	5,635	5,388
Dairy cattle sales	20	74	94	60
Cull cow sales	105	126	166	133
Bob/veal calf sales	23	21	18	20
Crop sales	26	59	16	30
Government payments	13	29	43	32
Patronage dividends	23	50	53	44
Custom work	3	0	14	6
Syrup	54	1	10	18
Timber	0	2	5	3
Other	44	58	35	41
<b>Total Cash Receipts (b)</b>	<b>\$4,998</b>	<b>\$5,862</b>	<b>\$6,090</b>	<b>\$5,775</b>
<b>Accrual Revenue Adjustments</b>				
Livestock inventory	22	13	131	81
Breeding livestock purchases	(66)	(9)	0	(25)
Accounts receivable (c)	33	(5)	40	34
Hay	(113)	(96)	130	12
Grain	1	(6)	3	1
<b>Total Accrual Revenue (d)</b>	<b>(\$124)</b>	<b>(\$102)</b>	<b>\$303</b>	<b>\$103</b>
<b>Total Farm Revenue (e)</b>	<b>\$4,874</b>	<b>\$5,760</b>	<b>\$6,393</b>	<b>\$5,878</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Auto and truck expenses	26	39	26	28
Bedding	99	114	205	152
Breeding	30	67	65	53
Chemicals/pesticides	2	0	0	0
Custom hire:	245	126	248	235
DHIA	18	29	19	20
Fertilizers & lime	63	64	63	67
Feed - purchased grain & other	1,219	1,502	1,423	1,455
Feed - purchased forage	297	120	251	286
Fuel and Oil	110	118	109	113
Insurance	92	112	58	83
Interest	171	105	107	126

	Bottom Third N=11	Middle Third N=12	Top Third N=12	All Farms Per Farm
Milk Marketing	59	99	79	74
Real estate taxes (farm portion)	92	59	67	71
Rent	105	45	62	82
Repairs	404	490	343	408
Seed and plants	10	10	23	19
Supplies	250	261	331	297
Utilities	200	166	154	169
Vet	45	71	44	50
Miscellaneous	93	104	60	79
<b>Total Cash Expenses (f)</b>	<b>\$4,243</b>	<b>\$4,153</b>	<b>\$4,267</b>	<b>\$4,409</b>
<b>Accrual Expense Adjustments</b>				
Depreciation	714	581	596	655
Accounts payable	(36)	(10)	(10)	(15)
Pre-paid expenses	13	11	(7)	7
Supplies	(\$14)	(\$1)	\$0	(\$6)
<b>Total Accrual Expenses (g)</b>	<b>\$677</b>	<b>\$581</b>	<b>\$579</b>	<b>\$641</b>
<b>Total Farm Expenses (h)</b>	<b>\$4,919</b>	<b>\$4,733</b>	<b>\$4,845</b>	<b>\$5,050</b>
<b>Cash Income from Milk (a-f)</b>	<b>\$444</b>	<b>\$1,289</b>	<b>\$1,369</b>	<b>\$979</b>
<b>Accrual Income from Milk (a+g-h)</b>	<b>(\$200)</b>	<b>\$704</b>	<b>\$830</b>	<b>\$372</b>
<b>Milk Income over Feed Costs</b>	<b>\$3,170</b>	<b>\$3,820</b>	<b>\$3,961</b>	<b>\$3,648</b>
<b>Net Cash Farm Income (b-f)</b>	<b>\$755</b>	<b>\$1,709</b>	<b>\$1,823</b>	<b>\$1,366</b>
<b>Net Farm Revenue (e-h)</b>	<b>(\$45)</b>	<b>\$1,026</b>	<b>\$1,548</b>	<b>\$828</b>
<b>Family Living (i)</b>	<b>\$643</b>	<b>\$886</b>	<b>\$576</b>	<b>\$593</b>
<b>Net Cash Farm Earnings (b-f-i)</b>	<b>\$112</b>	<b>\$824</b>	<b>\$1,247</b>	<b>\$773</b>
<b>Net Farm Earnings (e-h-i)</b>	<b>(\$688)</b>	<b>\$141</b>	<b>\$972</b>	<b>\$235</b>
<b>Off Farm income (j)</b>	<b>\$327</b>	<b>\$223</b>	<b>\$281</b>	<b>\$226</b>
<b>Net Family Cash Earnings (b-f-i+j)</b>	<b>\$439</b>	<b>\$1,047</b>	<b>\$1,528</b>	<b>\$999</b>
<b>Net Earnings (e-h-i+j)</b>	<b>(\$362)</b>	<b>\$364</b>	<b>\$1,253</b>	<b>\$461</b>
<b>Average Assets</b>	<b>\$17,411</b>	<b>\$21,386</b>	<b>\$15,247</b>	<b>\$16,800</b>
<b>Average Equity</b>	<b>\$12,906</b>	<b>\$18,442</b>	<b>\$12,328</b>	<b>\$13,195</b>
<b>Return on Assets</b>	<b>-3.34%</b>	<b>1.10%</b>	<b>7.45%</b>	<b>1.88%</b>
<b>Return on Equity</b>	<b>-6.86%</b>	<b>0.64%</b>	<b>9.20%</b>	<b>1.22%</b>
<b>Debt/Asset Ratio</b>	<b>28.64%</b>	<b>16.82%</b>	<b>20.07%</b>	<b>21.65%</b>

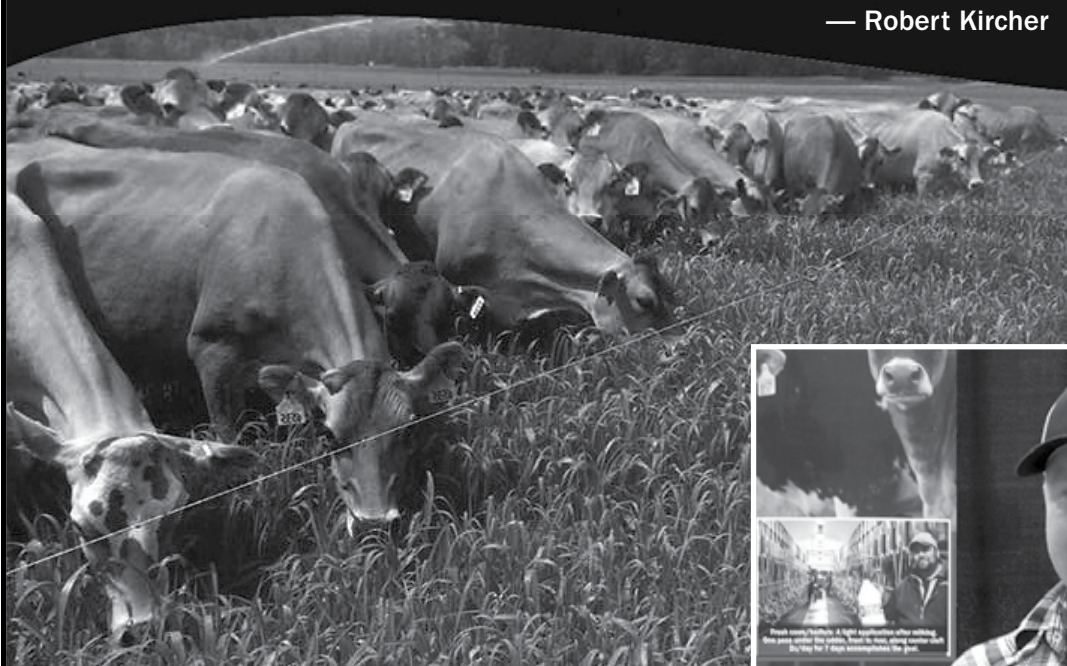
Sincere thanks to cooperating farmers and NOFA-VT in producing this summary. Financial supporters include Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Stonyfield Farm, Organic Valley/Cropp, Whitewave/Horizon, Lakeview Organic Grain, Yankee Farm Credit, Green Mt. Feeds, and Morrison Custom Feeds.

*continued on page 8*



***“...an important piece in our management.”***

— Robert Kircher



**FOREST GLEN OAKS FARMS, DAYTON, OREGON**  
 Dan Bansen family, 2nd and 3rd generation owners  
 Robert Kircher, co-owner and general manager  
 1700 registered Jerseys at two farm locations  
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Robert enjoys the challenge and fell in love with working around dairy cows at Forest Glen Oaks since he was 11. He earned his ag and dairy science degree from Oregon State before becoming a manager and then partner with Dan Bansen and his family at their second and third generation farm.

“We’ve been using Udder Comfort for 5 years here, mainly for fresh cows with edema as well as any cow showing high somatic cell counts or mastitis.



“We like that we have an effective product like this available to us. It is an important piece in our management.”

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## Vermont Organic Dairy Farm Profitability 2016

*continued from page 6*

pared with the study average of \$369,928. Interestingly, low profitability farms actually had a higher total revenue than the mid profitability farms, (\$338,165 vs. \$260,226). However, the low profitability farms also had much higher total expenses, leading to net farm revenues of just \$17,565 for this group (compared with \$47,832 for the middle group and \$101,623 for the high profitability group). This pattern shows that increasing production does not always lead to higher profitability, especially when production costs become too high.

The mid-profit group has the lowest total expenses per cow at \$4,153. Per cow expenses are almost the same on the low and high profit farms at \$4,243 and \$4,267. Given that the middle group also has the fewest cows per farm (48), this low expenditure per cow becomes even more dramatic. However, a comparison with the other groups reveals that cost reduction is not enough to ensure high profitability. By maximizing production while keeping costs as low as the low profit farms, the high profit group does a far better job at keeping profits up.

Breaking per cow expenses down reveals a few more interesting trends in 2016. The mid-profitability group actually spent the most on purchased grain per cow at \$1,502 despite generally lower expenses (compared with \$1,219 on low profit and \$1,423 on high profit farms). This is very different from the situation in 2015, when the middle group spent the least on purchased grain. The low amount of purchased grain on low-profit farms is likely related to their relatively low production numbers. The relatively high amount spent on forages by low profit farms (\$297 per cow vs. 120 on mid-profit farms and 251 on high profit farms) is likely due to substitution of expensive organic grain with relatively cheaper forages (lowering production numbers as well as profits).

Repairs and supply expenses follow the same pattern as grain expenses, with low profit farms spending \$654, middle farms spending the most at \$751, and high profit farms spending \$674. The middle group spent the least on labor and depreciation, with the low profit group spending the most and the high profit group in the middle. Depreciation was significantly higher in 2016 than 2015 at \$655 vs. \$593.

### 100% Grass-fed/ No-grain Dairy Profitability

Vermont organic dairy producers have for several years had the option of switching to a zero-grain production model as Organic Valley and other processors have expanded their

grass-fed dairy product lines. This market is less saturated than the organic dairy market as a whole, a fact reflected by a lack of production quotas and the continuing acceptance of new producers in 2016. Grass fed producers selling to Organic Valley receive a guaranteed premium above the organic price in addition to a \$1 premium that must be used to purchase additional soil fertility. This is intended to help grass-fed producers replace the nutrients typically brought onto the farm in the form of purchased grain.

The 2016 study included 5 farms that do not feed any grain. On average, this group of farms received a price of \$41.74/cwt, slightly lower than the 2015 grass-fed price of \$43.16 but still above the organic price. These grass-fed farms were slightly smaller than the organic group with an average of 53.1 cows per farm. Unsurprisingly, milk production per cow is significantly lower for this group at 8,580 lbs per cow (compared with 13,717). This lower production is somewhat compensated by extremely low purchased feed expenses of \$207 per cow. Additionally, in 2016 production on grass fed farms increased by 877 lbs per cow, perhaps indicating an improvement in pasture and forage quality on these farms.

This increase in production was matched by an increase in per cow expenses, up from \$2,879 in 2015 to \$3,612 in 2016. Average per cow revenues on the grass-fed farms were \$3,869 in 2016, higher than in 2015 but not enough to make up for the increase in expenses. As a result, grass-fed dairy farms were less profitable in 2016 than in 2015, with the average ROA decreasing from 1.91% to -1.47%

### 2016 Summary

In general, 2016 was a relatively good year for Vermont dairy producers on average, with ROA still positive for the average farm at 1.88%. However, 2016 also saw the beginning of the price reductions that have continued into 2018 due to market oversupply. Decreasing pay prices will make expanding herd size and production per cow more appealing as margins decrease, while smaller farms will likely take the biggest financial hit. While demand for some organic dairy products (ice cream and cheese) continues to increase slowly, the market will likely take several years to adjust to the current oversupply situation. The study team is currently in the process of collecting data for 2017, which will make it possible to understand exactly how the reduction in price affected organic dairy profitability for that year. ♦



# GRASSFED RESULTS PER COW

## 2016 Vermont Organic Dairy Farms Producing Grass Fed Milk (No Grain) (N=5)



	Grass Fed Per Farm	Grass Fed Per Cow	Grass Fed Per Cwt	All Vermont Per Farm
Average # of cows	53.1	53.1	53.1	64.1
Lbs shipped total	464,284	464,284	464,284	901,058
Lbs shipped/cow	8,580	8,580	8,580	13,717
Milk price	\$41.74	\$41.74	\$41.74	\$38.58
<b>Receipts</b>				
Milk sales (a)	193,010	3,570	41.74	345,167
Dairy cattle sales	2,800	43	0.43	3,824
Cull cow sales	5,314	98	1.16	8,516
Bob/Veal calf sales	1,450	25	0.27	1,295
Crop sales	183	3	0.04	1,969
Government payments	1,359	26	0.33	2,042
Patronage dividends	937	18	0.23	2,799
Custom work	501	6	0.06	412
Syrup	7,791	160	1.94	1,469
Timber	0	0	0.00	170
Other	3,519	61	0.79	2,595
<b>Total Cash Receipts (b)</b>	<b>\$216,863</b>	<b>\$4,010</b>	<b>\$47.00</b>	<b>\$370,258</b>
<b>Accrual Revenue Adjustments</b>				
Livestock inventory	(660)	7	0.04	5,208
Breeding livestock purchases	(2,149)	(45)	(0.71)	(1,608)
Accounts receivable (c)	1,845	24	0.16	2,178
Hay	(5,837)	(127)	(1.31)	764
Grain	0	0	0.00	81
<b>Total Accrual Revenue (d)</b>	<b>(\$6,801)</b>	<b>(\$141)</b>	<b>(\$1.82)</b>	<b>\$6,622</b>
<b>Total Farm Revenue (e)</b>	<b>\$210,062</b>	<b>\$3,869</b>	<b>\$45.18</b>	<b>\$376,880</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Auto and truck expenses	2,552	46	0.55	1,799
Bedding	6,681	89	0.98	9,709
Breeding	461	11	0.13	3,385
Chemicals/pesticides	0	0	0.00	25
Custom hire:	9,637	154	1.65	15,027
DHIA	629	8	0.08	1,261
Fertilizers & lime	1,775	32	0.48	4,287
Feed - purchased minerals & other	2,754	48	0.53	93,194
Feed - purchased forage	7,133	159	1.63	18,305
Fuel and Oil	6,859	124	1.55	7,207
Insurance	3,885	78	0.91	5,289
Interest	9,941	206	2.60	8,093
Labor	31,988	560	6.64	34,886

	Grass Fed Per Farm	Grass Fed Per Cow	Grass Fed Per CWT	All Vermont Per Farm
Real estate taxes (farm portion)	5,441	103	1.29	4,553
Rent	10,351	142	1.55	5,223
Repairs	21,062	404	5.03	26,121
Seed and plants	308	4	0.04	1,198
Supplies	14,735	263	2.94	19,053
Utilities	9,956	197	2.34	10,841
Vet	2,223	40	0.47	3,177
Miscellaneous	3,307	63	0.75	5,028
<b>Total Cash Expenses (f)</b>	<b>\$155,635</b>	<b>\$2,809</b>	<b>\$33.12</b>	<b>\$282,398</b>
<b>Accrual Expense Adjustments</b>				
Depreciation	45,533	858	10.94	41,945
Accounts payable	(2,872)	(60)	(0.74)	(966)
Pre-paid expenses	0	0	0.00	437
Supplies	400	5	0.05	(353)
<b>Total Accrual Expenses (g)</b>	<b>\$43,061</b>	<b>\$803</b>	<b>\$10.25</b>	<b>\$41,063</b>
<b>Total Farm Expenses (h)</b>	<b>\$198,696</b>	<b>\$3,612</b>	<b>\$43.37</b>	<b>\$323,461</b>
<b>Cash Income from Milk (a-f)</b>	<b>\$37,375</b>	<b>\$760</b>	<b>\$8.62</b>	<b>\$62,769</b>
<b>Accrual Income from Milk (a+g-h)</b>	<b>(\$3,841)</b>	<b>(\$18)</b>	<b>(\$1.47)</b>	<b>\$23,884</b>
<b>Milk Income over Feed Costs</b>	<b>\$183,122</b>	<b>\$3,364</b>	<b>\$39.58</b>	<b>\$233,668</b>
<b>Net Cash Farm Income (b-f)</b>	<b>\$61,228</b>	<b>\$1,200</b>	<b>\$13.88</b>	<b>\$87,859</b>
<b>Net Farm Revenue (e-h)</b>	<b>\$11,366</b>	<b>\$256</b>	<b>\$1.81</b>	<b>\$53,418</b>
<b>Family Living (i)</b>	<b>\$38,000</b>	<b>\$753</b>	<b>\$9.17</b>	<b>\$38,000</b>
<b>Net Cash Farm Earnings (b-f-i)</b>	<b>\$23,228</b>	<b>\$447</b>	<b>\$4.71</b>	<b>\$49,859</b>
<b>Net Farm Earnings (e-h-i)</b>	<b>(\$26,634)</b>	<b>(\$497)</b>	<b>(\$7.36)</b>	<b>\$15,418</b>
<b>Off Farm Income (j)</b>	<b>\$29,183</b>	<b>\$453</b>	<b>\$5.62</b>	<b>\$14,451</b>
<b>Net Family Cash Earnings (b-f-i+j)</b>	<b>\$52,411</b>	<b>\$900</b>	<b>\$10.32</b>	<b>\$64,311</b>
<b>Net Earnings (e-h-i+j)</b>	<b>\$2,549</b>	<b>(\$44)</b>	<b>(\$1.74)</b>	<b>\$29,870</b>
<b>Average Assets</b>	<b>\$808,704</b>	<b>\$16,207</b>	<b>\$205.12</b>	<b>\$1,076,185</b>
<b>Average Equity</b>	<b>\$601,705</b>	<b>\$11,867</b>	<b>\$150.50</b>	<b>\$845,250</b>
<b>Return on Assets</b>	<b>-1.47%</b>	<b>-1.47%</b>	<b>-1.47%</b>	<b>1.92%</b>
<b>Return on Equity</b>	<b>-3.35%</b>	<b>-3.35%</b>	<b>-3.35%</b>	<b>1.28%</b>
<b>Debt/Asset Ratio</b>	<b>23.64%</b>	<b>23.64%</b>	<b>23.64%</b>	<b>21.65%</b>

Sincere thanks to cooperating farmers and NOFA-VT in producing this summary. Financial supporters include Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Stonyfield Farm, Organic Valley/Cropps, Whitewave/Horizon, Lakeview Organic Grain, Yankee Farm Credit, Green Mt. Feeds, and Morrison Custom Feeds.

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS



### August: A Good Time to Plant

*by Michael Heller, Chesapeake Bay Foundation*

*Originally featured in the News & Notes from the Mountains-to-Bay Grazing Alliance, June 2018, and reprinted with permission.*

If you are thinking about planting annuals for good fall grazing – or, if you are planting perennials for hay or pasture – it's time to get in gear! August, and into early September, is the best time to plant. I spoke with a few mentors from the Maryland Grazers Network to see what they were planning to plant this August and September.

#### **Myron Martin**

Recommends a mix of alfalfa, orchard grass and red clover—or one of the new improved, and expensive, newer fescues to a fellow dairy farmer.

Dry weather this summer will shut down the growth in most pasture plants, planting alfalfa will perform well and provide good grazing.

The benefit of alfalfa is that the roots go deep and can be very important during the increasing number of dry spells. Cow's milk production is definitely higher when they have alfalfa to graze.

Likes to drill the grass seed in using the large front hopper in the drill, and the alfalfa and clover he puts in a separate small seed hopper. By removing the seed tubes the alfalfa/clover seed is scattered/broadcast on the surface, and he cultipacks it.

#### **Hay and Pasture**

Les Vough, former University of Maryland Extension forage expert, is always telling us that the ideal time for planting hay and pasture mixes is from August 10 through September 10. "Early planting is critical to provide for sufficient fall growth to ensure robust spring stands," he says. Here's what one of our Maryland Grazers' Network mentors does:

#### **Yates Clagett:**

Plants Daikon Radish at 10 pounds per acre.

It provides good grazing and is very good for building up the soil.

Daikon radish pulls nitrogen up from the soil, and its deep taproot can break hardpans in many soils.

Daikon radish is also known as the tillage radish or 'Groundhog' radish because of its long 12-16" taproot that penetrates deep into the soil.

#### **David Greene:**

Likes Pasja which is a leafy forage variety of brassica that can give multiple grazings.

Plants 4 pounds per acre as early in August as the soil moisture allows.

Some light tilling, such as disking, is important to give the germinating seeds a clean start.

## Annuals

The dry spells that have been happening with increased frequency these past few years have often meant that folks were feeding their animals precious hay or selling their animals to prevent harm to their pastures. Annuals can provide good grazing for 9 months of the year, depending on your needs, and are particularly good for getting through those dry spells. Fall pastures often offer only meager grazing. Annuals planted in August will give ample grazing as early as September and continuing into November.

Here's some thoughts from the mentors about Forage Brassicas: there is 'growing' interest in fall grazing of several of the different

varieties of brassicas for beef, dairy, and sheep.

I prefer to toss a half-bushel per acre of spring oats in with the forage brassicas. Using the spring oats was University of Maryland Extension's suggestion several years ago, when I asked about good fall forage for finishing beef. The spring oats get up quickly and provide some sweet grazing along with the brassicas. David Greene cautions not to use too many oats because they can compete too much with the brassicas.

Following a couple grazings, the field can be planted with cereal rye, vetch, and crimson clover for grazing early next spring.

Small grain mixtures such as cereal rye, wheat, or triticale mixed with a variety of other plants can be a good option for grazing during the usual lulls in pasture growth.

I really like the cereal rye, vetch, crimson clover mix, as it provides good early spring grazing before the pastures really kick into gear. This year, I might try some triticale in the mix based on Myron's recommendation. Myron mentioned that he is planting a mix of oats and Daikon radish on some of his fields. He does this mostly to build up the soil and will graze the animals on it in the fall.

If you have any planting questions, feel free to email Jeff Semler at [jsemler@umd.edu](mailto:jsemler@umd.edu). He is our University of Maryland Extension expert and has worked with all of the farmers mentioned. You can also contact Rob Schnabel at [rschnabel@cbf.org](mailto:rschnabel@cbf.org) who can answer questions and provide advice on funding opportunities that help grazers. Good luck and good farming.

### Myron Martin:

Is always trying different ideas and combinations on his farm.

When it comes to planting annuals for fall grazing, he's has a few plans. Corn silage will be coming off soon and he plans to get right back out to the fields to put in triticale, ryegrass, crimson clover and hairy vetch.

Start grazing this fall when the triticale gets up about 12." This mix will overwinter and he'll be grazing it again in April.

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## SEPTEMBER EDUCATIONAL EVENTS IN THE NORTHEAST

In addition to the upcoming 18th Annual NODPA Field Days, coming to Knoxville, Maryland, on September 27th and 28th, we have received notification of two special events that are taking place in September. The first on is a 2-day, Lessons We Can Learn from the Pasture, in Sherman, NY, on September 12th and 13th. The second event is a full-day meeting with Alan Savory on September 19, 2018 at the Martindale Reception Center near Hinkletown, PA. Here's more information:

### Lessons We Can Learn from the Pasture, September 12 & 13, 2018 Agri-Dynamics pasture walk promises direct connection to experienced professionals and fellow farmers

Agri-Dynamics, in partnership with sponsors Kitchen Table Consultants, NOFA NY and Organic Valley, together with host Green Heron Growers will present Lessons We Can Learn from the Pasture at 2361 Wait Corners Road, Sherman, NY 14781 beginning Wednesday, September 12, 2018, at 9:00 AM, and concluding Thursday, September 13, at 5:00 PM.

The event will offer an in-depth look at pasture forages and how to create diversity in your pasture while supplying your animals with the proper nutrition for increased weight gains in beef and increasing milk components in your milk. Attendees can expect an emphasis on building high quality, low cost forages, increasing the diversity in the forage selection and building the microbial population in your soils. The multi-day event also plans to cover ways to improve your net income by utilizing all of your pasture resources including the use of "silvo-pasture" woodland grazing. Event workshops will consist of a series of lectures, pasture walks and observations of pasture trials with microbial and mycorrhizae inoculation and forage diversity.

Agri-Dynamics lineup of special guests and discussion topics includes:

- Sarah Flack, Consultant and Author of The Art and Science of Grazing and Organic Dairy Production
- Pastures from the Plants' Perspective
- Graziers Tool Box-Using Livestock to Improve Pastures
- Dr. Silvia Abel-Caines, DVM, Ph.D., Ruminant Nutritionist for Organic Valley/CROPP
- Meeting the Nutritional Requirements of 100% Grass-Fed Lactating Dairy Cows
- Feeding Strategies for Increasing Milk Solids in Cows on Pasture
- Steve Gabriel, Ecologist and Forest Farmer and Educator, Finger Lakes Permaculture Institute
- How to Improve Grazing Practices with the Use of Silvopasture
- Jonathan Zeiset, Zeiset Ag Consulting & Sales

- Trials Analysis and Pasture Walk Observations

The spirit of this event dates back to 1975, when Jerry Brunetti founded Agri-Dynamics and subsequently spent three decades educating folks on the health benefits of farming systems that work with nature rather than against nature.

"In the early years of my education, I was introduced to Jerry. He was instrumental in putting me and my operations at Green Heron Growers on the path to understanding the "vital force" that is responsible for all healing, immunity, growth, production, fertility and wellness. Jerry once said that 'it is important to work with the herd below ground as well as the herd above ground.' With that information, I've devoted my career to building the biology of the living soil, an extensive concept that ultimately translates into tenderness, rich flavor and nutrient dense foods."

In addition to feeding the mind, attendees will be nourished by farm-raised organic meals from Green Heron Growers' on-site kitchen crew. Tickets are now on sale through Eventbrite with single day and full access options. All guests who purchase full event registration tickets by August 15 will receive a free copy of The Farm as Ecosystem by Jerry Brunetti. Interested individuals may register online at <https://grassfedworkshop.eventbrite.com> and on Green Heron Growers' Facebook page, or mail a check to: Green Heron Growers, 2361 Wait Corners Rd. Panama, NY 14767.

### Southeast PA Graziers Plan Full-Day Meeting with Alan Savory September 19, 2018

Southeast PA Graziers is planning a full-day meeting with Alan Savory on September 19, 2018 at the Martindale Reception Center near Hinkletown, PA. Savory will be telling his life story and sharing with us how and why the principles of holistic resource management make sense for the world we live in today. This will be an opportunity to catch the vision from one of the founders of the Holistic Resource Movement. Alan Savory was catapulted to the front line position on this subject when he gave a TED (Technology, Education and Design) Talk in 2013, entitled, 'How to Fight Desertification and Reverse Climate Change'.

Chris Kirsten, also from the Savory Institute, will be speaking on the principles of holistic resource Management. With a longstanding passion for regenerative agricultural and better food distribution systems, Chris has dedicated his life to helping connect ranchers with consumers in ways that create synergistic value for both sides.

This full-day meeting will include an organic lunch. The Martindale Center is located at 352 Martindale Road, Ephrata, PA 17522. This is a rare, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and we are expecting a large crowd, so please register early. Registration is \$75.00 and you can send a check to Lancaster Co. Graziers, 1142 Gap Road, Kinzers, PA 17535. If you have questions, please call or text Roman Stoltzfoos at 717-278-1070.



**You're Invited Sept. 12th & 13th**

**2018 Agri-Dynamics  
Workshop and Pasture Walk**

*"Lessons we can Learn  
from the Pasture"*

**Registration fees :**

9/12- \$45 (includes 3 meals)

9/13 \$35 (includes 2 meals)

Both days- \$70 (includes 5 meals)

**Registration online:**

<https://grassfedworkshop.eventbrite.com>

or mail to: Green Heron Growers,  
2361 Wait Corners Rd,

Panama, NY 14767 or call 716-720-3695.

**Guest Speakers**

**Silvia Abel-Caines, DVM, Ph.D**  
**Staff Ruminant Nutritionist**  
**for Organic Valley**

Meeting the Nutritional Requirements  
of 100% Grass-Fed Lactating Dairy Cows  
Feeding Strategies for Increasing  
Milk Solids in Cows on Pasture

**Sarah Flack**

**Author of The Art and Science  
of Grazing and Organic Dairy Production**

Pastures from the Plants' Perspective;  
Graziers Tool Box-Using Livestock  
to Improve Pastures

**Steve Gabriel**

**Ecologist, Forest Farmer and Educator**

How to Improve Grazing practices  
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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

## The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) Meeeting in Tucson, Arizona

*Compiled by Ed Maltby, who attended the meeting, and used reports by the  
National Organic Coalition and the Organic Trade Association for this summary*

Over the course of three days in April, NOSB, under the leadership of NOSB Chair Tom Chapman, discussed eight proposals, 40 inputs on the National List scheduled to expire in 2020, and two discussion documents. NOSB received 1,600 written comments prior to the meeting, and listened to 13.5 hours of oral testimony received from approximately 48 commenters during two webinars and 85 commenters during the in-person meeting. NOSB voted on eight proposals and considered two discussion documents. Of the eight proposals, six passed and two failed.

Two new members to the Board were announced:

- Dr. James Greenwood – Environmentalist – CA – Organic avocado farmer and handler and has served on BOD for US House Avocado Board. Faculty School of Public Health, UCLA, and part of the Center for Public Health. Masters in Public Health & Microbiology, doctorate in Microbiology.
- Mr. Eric Swartz – Handling – CA – CEO United Vegetables Growers Cooperative – BA in logistics management from PSU.

The meeting started with updates from the National Organic Program (NOP) including opening remarks from Ruihong Guo (NOP's Acting Deputy Administrator) and Greg Ibach (the Undersecretary of USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs). The Under Secretary is a skilled and proficient politician who related his experience as a cow calf producer as well as Director of Ag in Nebraska. He tapped into his knowledge of organic with the telling phrase: "We have the responsibility of protecting animal and plant health and welfare." He pitched USDA's Process Verified Program as a way for organic producers to further differentiate their products in lieu of NOSB recommendations and NOP notice and comment rulemaking. This suggestion illustrated how out of touch he was with the holistic system that is organic certification. If organic producers need to obtain further certification on Animal Welfare, costing time and money, the organic certification process would be undermined in the market place.

Associate Deputy Administrator Jenny Tucker also delivered a report on activity at NOP. The report focused largely on NOP's efforts to work with other programs within USDA to curb the import of fraudulent organic products, boots-on-the-ground inspections of certifiers and operations in response to complaints, and rulemaking to bring NOP current with NOSB's recommendations on materials recommended to be added to the National List.

Increased oversight and enforcement of organic imports were

the focus topics of the meeting, with a half-day dedicated to two expert panels followed by nearly two hours of subcommittee discussion. NOSB also listened to over 70 commenters addressing the topic. The board was completely engaged on the topic of enforcement and integrity. Fueled by an influx of information and testimony from public comments and the two expert panels, NOSB made a place for all members to discuss a dozen focus areas ranging from required certification for excluded operations to inspector training and qualifications to increased residue testing. The Board highlighted some immediate steps it can take to advise USDA on curtailing fraudulent shipments to the U.S. and some longer-term projects, which will strengthen enforcement of the organic standards both domestically and across the globe. This discussion displayed the current Board's confidence and effectiveness in advising USDA on matters where there is unanimity among organic stakeholders. NOSB will continue its work and bring back developed proposals at future NOSB meetings, including one for the fall 2018 meeting.

Other topics generating significant discussion included:

A) A proposal to eliminate the incentive to convert native ecosystems to organic production.

NOSB's proposal on conservation of native ecosystems drew broad support and despite industry's unsubstantiated criticism on its potential to impact producers' ability to expand their operations, the recommendation were changed so that it would not affect producers clearing land that had not yet returned to a state of a native ecosystem. The change was to the definition of Native Ecosystems was made, removing the words "semi-natural vegetation." Board members Tom Chapman and Ashley Swaffar felt this change addressed the concerns that were heard through public comment and that they shared, and were comfortable in voting "yes" to move the proposal forward.

B) The allowance of Polyoxin D Zinc Salt to help organic crop producers combat fungal diseases such as mummy berry and powdery mildew;

The consideration of Polyoxin D Zinc Salt illuminated the specific conditions necessary to convince NOSB that a new material is necessary in organic production. Comments were received on this petition from organic and conventional growers as well as university researchers. They all corroborated that this tool would resolve some ongoing production challenges for which organic producers do not have effective treatments. The Board also acknowledged that this substance would support producers growing in soil



## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

(rather than in containers).

C) Maintaining the genetic integrity of seed grown on organic land.

The discussion document on maintaining the genetic integrity of seed grown on organic land illustrated the balancing act that NOSB must perform in developing its recommendations. It must make fact- and data-driven decisions to move the organic seed industry forward without hamstringing producers with a dwindling diversity of seed genetics and production traits. NOSB will continue its work on seed integrity and bring forth a proposal for the fall 2018 meeting.

**SUNSET 2020:** NOSB discussed 40 National List inputs undergoing the 2020 Sunset Review. Public comments were generally in favor of relisting the majority. Inputs that were highlighted due to concerns raised by the public are as follows:

- a) Crops: Aqueous Potassium Silicate, Newspaper or other Recycled Paper; Elemental Sulfur, Liquid Fish Fertilizer, Ethylene, Microcrystalline Cheesewax
- b) Livestock: Sucrose Octonate Esters
- c) Handling: Glycerides, Fructooligosaccharides, Gums, Lecithin, Tragacanth Gum

NOSB encouraged stakeholders to submit public comments for the

fall 2018 meeting about the necessity or essentiality of these materials for production/handling, their effects on the environment and human health, and the availability of natural/organic forms.

### Livestock Proposals

#### Add to § 205.2 Definitions

*Emergency (treatment for parasite control in breeding, dairy and fiber bearing animals)*

An urgent, non-routine situation in which the organic system plan's preventive measures and veterinary biologics are proven, by laboratory analysis or visual inspection, to be inadequate to prevent life-threatening illness or to alleviate pain and suffering.

(4) Organic breeding, dairy and fiber bearing animals when meeting the following conditions:

(i) Organic livestock has been managed according to 238(b) and 238(c)(2), 238(c)(4), and 603(a)(23) and only in the event of an emergency where management strategies have been proven insufficient to prevent or control parasites within the accepted threshold for specific parasites, age and species of the animal. These management strategies include but are not limited to, forage height and plant diversity to maintain parasite levels below treat

*continued on page 33*

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## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

# Organic Milk Pay, Retail and Feed Prices: JULY 2018

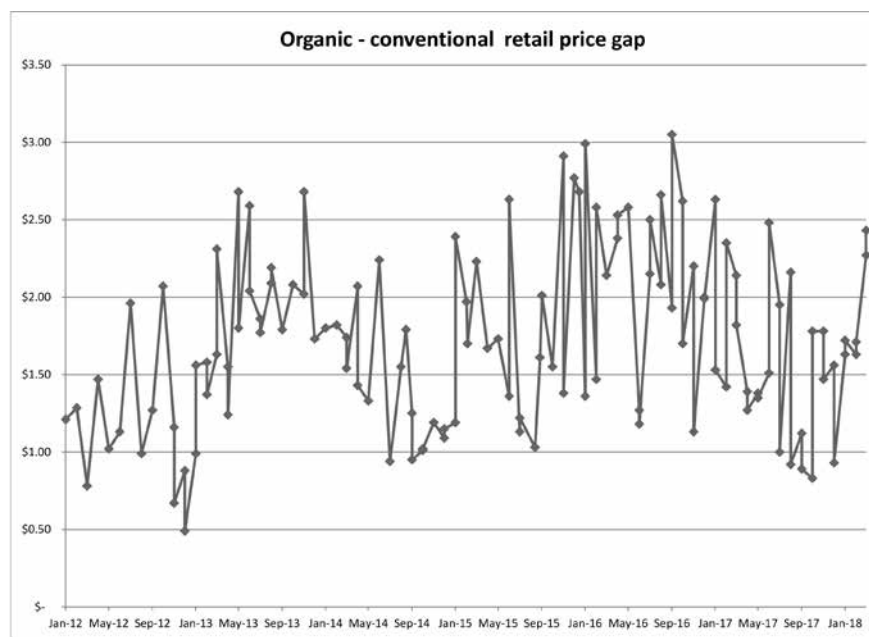
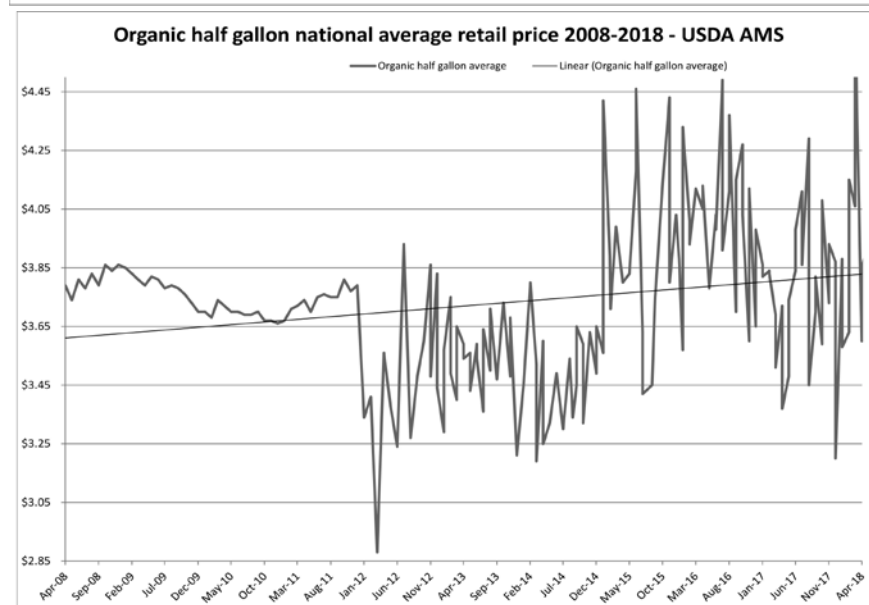
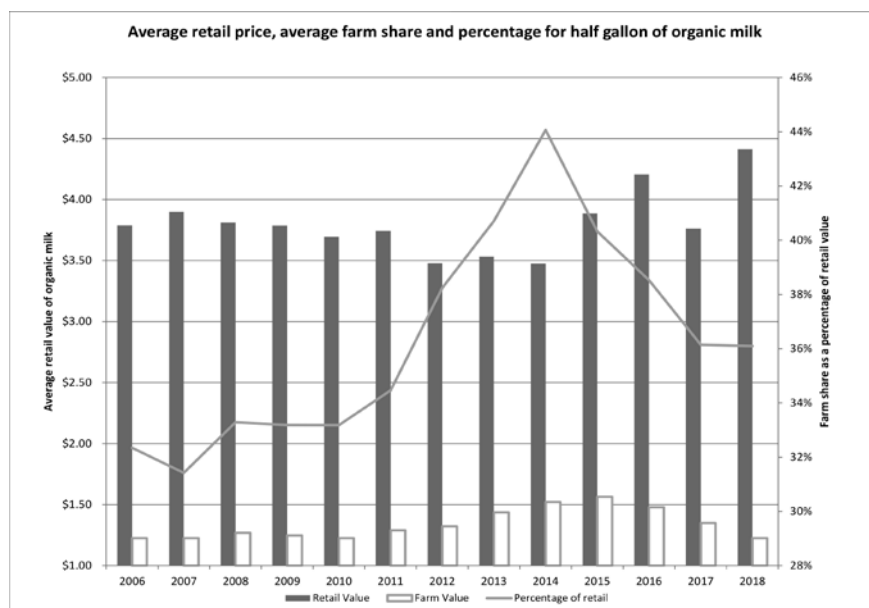
By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

USDA AMS reports total organic milk products sales for May were 219 million pounds, down 3.1 percent from May 2017, but up 0.1 percent January-May 2018 compared with the same period of 2017. Organic whole milk sales for May 2018, 88 million pounds, were down 0.1 percent compared with May of the previous year, but up 5.6 percent year-to-date 2018 compared with 2017.

Utilization of organic milk appears to be changing for the overall benefit in demand for farmgate organic milk. Nationally the USDA AMS reports no increase in sales of organic milk at retail from 2016 to 2017, with increases in whole milk offsetting the decline of non-fat products. In the only Federal Milk Marketing Order that reports utilization of organic milk, despite the fact that all the others have the data and capacity to do so, the monthly report shows that in Federal Milk Market Order 1, in New England, utilization of organic whole milk in May 2018 totaled 15.5 million pounds, down slightly from 15.8 million pounds one year earlier. However organic reduced fat milk utilization for May this year, nearly 23.0 million pounds, was up from 21.8 million pounds one year earlier, which is an increase of 644,797 pounds of total utilization of organic milk. Whether this is a trend will be difficult to know given the lack of published national data on utilization of organic milk but the New England Marketing Order attracts a high volume of organic milk for sale at retail.

There is no movement on pay price or any lifting of production restrictions. The average pay price is at the same level as 2012. There are reports from all parts of the country that producers are being forced to accept lower prices to get a buyer, as low as \$23 per hundred pounds in one area of the Mid West, with the assumption that this milk will be used for GMO free products. The consolidation of cooperatives that has mostly affected conventional producers has an effect on organic producers when they have to change handlers to gain a market for their milk or return to conventional production.

The system for determining pay price is broken for producers who have no leverage in the market. While there are regional differences in milk supply and utilization and differences in how the various handlers and processors have managed their oversupply, it is clear that farmers have had to bear the brunt of the economic impact of milk oversupply and we therefore have to lead the effort to create a better system that can be applied nationally to protect



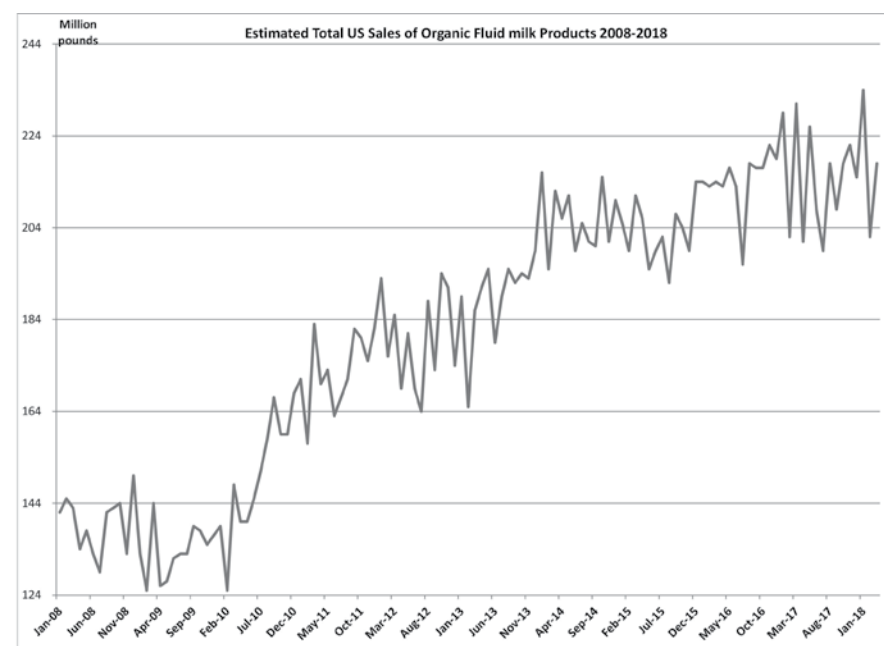
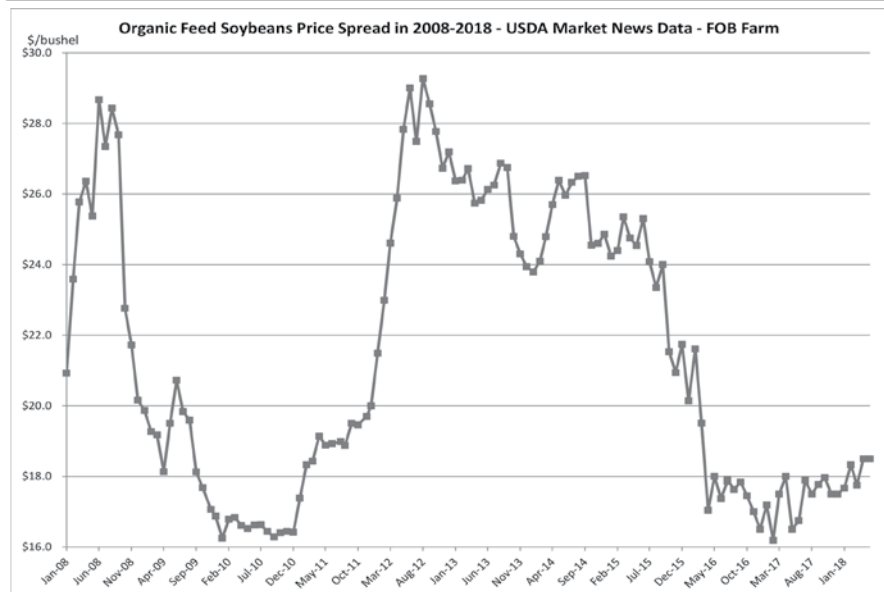
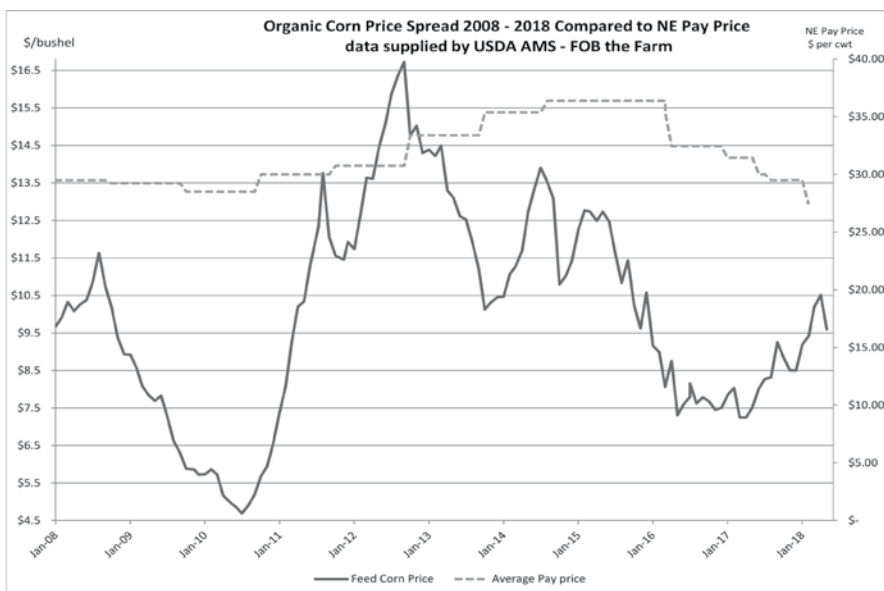
## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

our collective interests. The current supply management practiced by the two major buyers has repeatedly failed and has not prevented or immediately curtailed oversupply. Without effective supply management there can be no long term sustainable pay price and we are doomed to the same three to four year boom and bust cycle of the conventional market. While many agree that a Canadian model cannot work in conventional dairy, perhaps there is still time to formulate a version for organic dairy. Perhaps the opportunity is greater now that the growth in demand for organic dairy is smaller and easier to predict.

In 2010, representatives of the three regional producer Alliances spent some time in developing the basis of an organic dairy supply management program. This program assumes that there will be national pooling of organic milk under a similar system, though simpler and easier to understand than the Federal Milk Marketing Order which was originally set up to solve similar problems in the conventional milk industry. One organic pool of milk will have many costs saving for buyers and processors in terms of trucking, field staff and utilization of processing facilities. For processors, efficient supply management will reduce their cost of balancing to more predictable levels and save them from the high cost of a glut of milk. For producer/processors like Aurora Dairy, there will be the added advantage of not having to balance their supply on the back of their farm operations, saving the expense and operational loss of selling cows and reducing milk volumes. A single pool of organic milk will give USDA AMS great ability to track variances in production that may be caused by abuses of the NOP regulations. The main points of the program were:

1. Develop an allocation system (quota with an active base) for every producer based on some agreed upon method, i.e., most recent historical data, etc., regardless of handler/processor.
2. Must be mandatory across the country – if you produce organic milk you are in the program.
3. AMS will provide meaningful utilization and production data through mandatory electronic reporting, similar to the non-organic market.
4. AMS/USDA or an independent entity will be charged with monitoring the system and supply projections will be calculated based on utilization and historical information with allowances for unpredictable market demand of say 3%.
5. AMS/Independent entity will supply producers with quota adjustments quarterly to ensure any changes will be small.

*continued on page 18*





## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

*continued from page 17*

6. Producers will adjust their quota accordingly, uniform increases are applied when demand exceeds supply, and reductions are implemented uniformly when demand drops.
7. Producers are not paid for overages.
8. Processors pay for all milk regardless of quota – cannot blend the price.
9. Over quota milk income goes to pay for the Supply Management Program – cost of data collection, accounting and administration.

The above ideas lay out the basis for a program if the organic dairy industry is willing to move forward to a sustainable future for all sizes of organic dairy operations and a consistent, high quality supply for processors.

This still does not address pay price but does give a stable platform for determining it. Consumers and other research tied to Buy Local programs has shown overwhelmingly that if the consumer knows the money goes back to producers they will pay more without dropping consumption. The retail prices that has been recorded since 2008 illustrates that a change in the retail price of up to \$2 has little effect on sales. Some options that have been put forward for determining pay price are:

- Relating the pay price for organic to conventional pay price- this is inappropriate as inputs and production costs are so different. Showing the comparison between the two systems in terms of pay price lacks any rationality or honesty.

- Relating the pay price to the average retail price - this is difficult as the retail price varies by as much as \$2 per ½ gallon and there are many regional fluctuations unrelated to where the milk is produced.
- Set a base price based on the costs of production that includes a standard Return on Investment (ROI) that allows for investing in the farm and in those that work the farm. The data is available to provide average costs of inputs and long term research is also available to make allowance for unique organic costs of production.
- One answer to determining pay price could be: Assume the base price with seasonal quality payments are what the companies can afford in 'normal' times and introduce into contracts and cooperative agreements a feed/input trigger that would change the pay price when certain criteria are met. This would have to be tied to supply management that is effective.

The Jacobsen NON-GMO & Organic Weekly Bulletin reports that Mid-west organic corn activity for new crop contracting is picking up. With U.S. imports for organic corn down by 14% month over month in May and 90% year over year, old crop prices remain in the \$9 a bushel region. Imports in 2018 are lower by 80% which have seen prices increase for bids on new crop corn near \$9.75 and offers up at \$10.25 at the farm. Mid-west organic soybean trading activity is slow, ahead of new crop contracts. Imports are down 28% year over year, for 2018 and 49% month over month in May. Bids for organic soybeans are seen near the \$18.75 handle and offers are up at \$19.25. There is a slight carry reported for new crop beans. Mid-west and west organic food-grade prices are \$21 at \$22, with east coast organic food-grade soybean prices are \$1.50 to \$2 higher. Organic feed wheat has ticked up in tandem with corn and bids at \$8.75 with offers coming in near \$9.25 at the farm. Demand seems to have picked up with a dearth of old crop supply.



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FORAGES

## Holterholm Farms, MD. Photo by David Nevala, for Organic Valley



# Tools for Survival: Weathering the Current Dairy Crisis While Maintaining Organic Integrity

**The 18th Annual NODPA Field Days, September 27 & 28, 2018**

**Yarrowsburg Mennonite Church, Knoxville, Maryland 21758**

*By Nora Owens, NODPA Field Days Coordinator*

**T**ools: used by farmers every day to make their farms work. These days, with an oversupply of milk and historically low milk prices, farmers continue to reach for all of their tools to do the best jobs they can under difficult financial circumstances.

net income and to rethink management practices to increase efficiency.

We are fortunate to have Jeff Semler, Washington County, Maryland Cooperative Extension Agent and Maryland Grazers Network Facilitator, and Jacki Martinez Perkins, Organic Dairy Specialist, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) who will be co-facilitators for this session.

*continued on page 20*

At the 18th Annual NODPA Field Days, we will be providing reliable tools and practical strategies to help farmers weather the current dairy crisis without sacrificing organic integrity. There will be a hands-on, farmer-to-farmer session in which everyone can share innovative low-cost and no-cost strategies to maximize



**Jeff Simler**

## **NEW THIS YEAR: EARLY BIRD RATE**

NODPA is offering an early-bird rate for those who register by Wednesday, September 19th. You can still pay in-person, if you prefer, but you must let us know that you are planning to attend (by phone, email or mail) by September 19th. FOR FURTHER DETAILS, PLEASE SEE THE REGISTRATION FORM ON PAGE 21.



## Thursday, September 27, 2018

**8:30 – 11:30 am Tour of Peace Hollow Farm**, Janet and Myron Martin, 2148 Rohrsersville Rd, Knoxville, MD, 21758 (meet at the farm; light refreshments will be available)

**Noon – 1:30 pm Lunch and Registration**, Yarrowsburg Mennonite Church, 2142 Rohrsersville Rd., Knoxville, MD 21758

**1:30 – 2:30 The Grass Fed Label: Is it still the 'Silver Bullet' of Organic Milk?**

This panel will discuss what they see as the future for grass-fed milk label, once seen as the hope for stable organic milk pay price but now going through its own growing pains.

Myron Martin, Peace Hollow Farm, Knoxville, MD, Ron Holter, Holterholm Farms, Jefferson, MD, Forrest Stricker, Spring Creek Farms, Wernersville, PA, Dale Johnson, University of Maryland (invited)

**2:30 – 3:30 Planning for the Future of your Farm in Difficult Financial Times**

Farmers wondering about how to plan for their financial futures, given the current crisis in organic dairy, will hear from experts in the field and farmers currently planning for their futures in this session, and will have time to have their questions answered.

Jeff Semler, Washington County, MD Cooperative Extension, Dale Johnson, University of Maryland (invited), Curvin Eby, Hagerstown, MD (invited)

**3:30 – 5:00 Maximizing Net Income and Planning for the Future of your Farm: learn how to do more with less**

This farmer-to-farmer session focuses on sharing innovative strategies and best practices to maximize net income. It will be co-facilitated by Jeff Semler, Washington County, MD Cooperative Extension and Jacki Perkins, Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA).

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

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

**7:00 – 9:00 Keynote: Crisis in the Organic Dairy Movement: History, Analysis & What Farmers Can Do to Level the Playing Field**

Mark Kastel, the Cornucopia Institute. Q & A and discussion to follow

## Friday, September 28, 2018



**Sarah Flack**

**6:30 – 9:00 am Continental Breakfast**

**7:00 – 9:00 Producer-Only Meeting**

**9:00 – 10:30 Money Matters:** Demystifying Financial Recordkeeping to Improve your Farm's Decision Making Capacity and Bottom Line

Sarah Flack, dairy educator, consultant and author, Sarah Flack Consulting, Vermont.

**10:30 – 11:15 Organic Dairy Industry Updates: Policy, the Farm Bill, Organic Plus Labels/Add-on Certification Programs, and more**

Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director will describe the latest industry and policy updates that impact all organic dairy producers

**11:15 – 12:00 Farm Tour Preview: Holterholm Farms**, Ron and Adam Holter will give an introduction to their farm and answer questions ahead of the farm tour

**12:00 – 1:00 Lunch**

**1:00 Travel to Holterholm Farms**, 5903 Holter Road, Jefferson, Maryland 21755

**1:30 – 3:00 Farm Tour**



**Sarah Flack Consulting**







**Jacki Martinez Perkins**

We will also hear all the options available to farm families as they consider the future within the current realities of the organic dairy industry. We will look at the future of the grass-fed label and will tackle the very important issues facing the organic dairy industry. Sarah Flack will join us to provide farm families with the tools to improve both the farm's decision-making capacity and their financial bottom line by demystifying financial recordkeeping. According to Sarah Flack, "Financial literacy, such as understanding the farm's cash flow and the importance of financial recordkeeping, is extremely important for farm management especially in these very lean financial times."

In order to keep a solid focus on maintaining the integrity of the organic label we have invited Mark Kastel as our keynote speaker. Mark, the co-founder of the Cornucopia Institute, a populist farm policy research group based in Wisconsin, has been a long-time advocate for farm families who is devoted to the integrity of the organic label. His professional experience includes political consulting and lobbying on behalf of family farm groups and business development work benefitting family-scale farmers. Mark's keynote presentation, *The Crisis in the Organic Dairy Movement: History,*

*Continued on page 24*



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## REGISTRATION

### NODPA's 18th ANNUAL FIELD DAYS & PRODUCER MEETING & DINNER

#### Cost

Early	On-site		Qty.	Total
Registration: Thursday & Friday				
	Free	Organic dairy & transitioning dairy producers		
\$30	\$45	All who aren't organic dairy producers		
Meals: Thursday & Friday				
\$10	\$15	Thursday lunch for Adults		
\$5	\$10	Thursday lunch (under 11)		
\$25	\$35	Thurs. dinner for Adults		
\$12.50	\$15	Thurs. dinner (under 11)		
<b>Free</b>		Transitioning farm member. Thursday evening dinner		
\$5	\$10	Friday breakfast (7:30-9 am)		
\$10	\$15	Friday lunch		
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[www.nodpa.com/fielddays\\_registration\\_2018.shtml](http://www.nodpa.com/fielddays_registration_2018.shtml)

## FIELD DAYS

Analysis, and What Farmers Can Do to Balance the Playing Field, will be particularly timely given the challenges facing organic dairy farm families and the many changes happening in today's organic dairy industry. There will be plenty of time for Q&A and discussion following this presentation.

Again this year, we are fortunate to be able to offer two farm tours. On Thursday morning, Myron and Janet Martin will host a farm tour at their Peace Hollow Farm, just next door to the Yarrowsburg Mennonite Church. Peace Hollow Farm was the featured farm in the March 2017 NODPA News and can be viewed online at [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com) plus, we will present highlights in the



September 2018 NODPA News, ahead of NODPA Field Days. The Martin's farm a total of 218 acres and is an all-grass dairy located in a mile-wide valley in Washington County, Maryland, bound by the Appalachian Trail to the east, the Potomac River to

*continued on page 22*

*continued from page 21*

the south and Elk Ridge to the west. Their entire herd, including calves and heifers, has been grain-free since 2009. They have a thriving farm stand and organic beef market.

On Friday afternoon, we will travel about 10 minutes down the road to Holterholm Farms, located in Jefferson MD, in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in southwestern Frederick County, Maryland. Ron and his son, Adam Holter, farm together full-time. The farm has been grass-based since 1995 and was certified organic in 2005. The Holter's own 207 acres and rent close to another 100. You can read more about Holterholm Farms, the Featured Farm in this NODPA News issue.

Both Myron Martin and Ron and Adam Holter are members of the Maryland Grazers Network, a mentorship program that pairs experienced livestock, dairy, sheep, and poultry producers with farmers who want to learn new grazing skills. The Grazers Network Project Team provides technical assistance and includes experts in pasture and forage management, financial management, marketing, and funding resources. Developed by Clagett Farm and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF),

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[cornell.edu](mailto:cac22@cornell.edu)

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Location: Wells, VT

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Through our Farm-Based Research projects, PASA is working to measure the dimensions of sustainability that our farmers care most about: the health of their soils, the nutrient-density of their products, and the financial viability of their farm businesses. Measuring these sustainability indicators let us establish benchmarks for what's typical—and what's possible. PASA is hiring a Research Coordinator to help grow our research program and build capacity to serve an expanding network of farms with essential data resources. This is an exciting opportunity to work directly

*continued on page 34*



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## NODPA FIELD DAYS FARM TOUR

### Peace Hollow Farm, Knoxville, Maryland



# Tools for Survival: Weathering the Current Dairy Crisis While Maintaining Organic Integrity

**The 18th Annual NODPA Field Days, September 27 & 28, 2018**

*continued from page 21*

the Network is a collaboration of the CBF, University of Maryland Extension, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. We have invited members of this team, including Washington County Cooperative Extension agent Jeff Semler and University of Maryland's Dale Johnson to participate in Field Days workshops and join the farm tours to further explain their work and answer questions.

The 18th Annual NODPA Field Days program will be filled with information sessions, discussions and educational workshops that focus on the important and timely issues facing all organic dairy farm families. In addition, we will have a full trade show, our annual social hour and banquet featuring delicious local and organic food, and NODPA's Annual Meeting on Thursday evening. Our Producer-Only meeting takes place bright and early Friday morning, and will follow a continental breakfast.

Meeting attendees will be able to visit the diverse trade show throughout the meeting, and will have many opportunities to meet new people and catch up with old friends. Brochures will be going out in the mail in August. Registration and more information can be found online at [www.nodpa.com](http://www.nodpa.com) and in the September NODPA News.

This is the first year we have brought the NODPA Field Days to Maryland and are very excited about this very welcoming setting. This is also the first year we are offering an early-bird rate for those who register by Wednesday, September 19th. You can still pay in-person, if you prefer, but you must let us know that you are planning to attend (by phone, email or mail) by September 19th. For more information or if you have questions about sponsoring or exhibiting at the 18th Annual NODPA Field Days, contact NODPA Field Days coordinator Nora Owens any time 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

**A** There was a lot of discussion on the realities of organic milk production these days. Farmers shared some of their struggles and frustrations with a pay price that has dropped below many farmers cost of production. Producers expressed fears about losing milk markets, anger towards the very large farms that seem to be skirting the pasture requirements, and concern that the major milk processors may view this level of pay price that is causing financial instability as the “new normal”. In early June, three cows on a small farm were suffering with what appeared to be laminitis. The cows were being fed pasture, greenchop, corn, soymeal, and minerals. Several producers suggested the cause of the laminitis would be from a lack of fiber in the early, lush pasture and green chop; they all suggested the addition of dry hay. One farmer suggested that the addition of dry hay to their ration at this time of year helps the cow in some other ways. Hay helps to raise milk components, keep body condition, and slows the rate of feed passage through the gut. It was also suggested to count the chews per cud as a measure of proper digestion – a minimum should be 50, but ideal is 60 to 70. Buffering products like sodium bi-carb and Desert Dynamine were also suggested.

At the suggestion of supplementing lush pastures with dry hay, one producer lamented that he cannot get the cows to eat any hay when the pastures are really good. Two other farmers suggested that oat hay is enticing and palatable enough that cows will look forward to it even during great pasture growth. One explained that they plant a forage oat variety that is harvested for hay. It was mentioned that it is the best feed for work horses on their days off in the summer; it has a cooling effect on horses, helping them rest.

Another farmer suggested that these cows were eating pastures that were “too good”. She suggested that the protein was in excess of the cows’ needs. “Farmers with (these) symptoms can try giving all the paddocks more time to rest and recover in between grazing and put the cows into slightly taller grass. This will also grow you more forage. I saw occasional laminitis in my cows for years even on a no grain diet until I raised my grazing heights. Feed quality hay in the meantime.”

It was also suggested that this could be an early stage of fescue toxicity or copper deficiency. And others recommended that the hooves be examined by a vet or a good hoof trimmer to make sure of the diagnosis.

Another farmer offered this strategy for gauging their grazing – they keep dry hay and bi-carb in the bunk at all times. Most of the times, the cows don’t eat it. “If the cows start to eat the baking soda we know we are making them eat too far down the plant (too much protein). When we have got the grazing right they don’t eat any hay or baking soda”. ♦

## Website & E-Newsletter Advertising

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

### Website Advertising

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

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

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

### E-Newsletter Advertising

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

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

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

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Interested in one or both of these opportunities? For more information, contact Nora Owens at:

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

**Phone:** 413-772-0444

Go to the following web page for more information:

[www.nodpa.com/web\\_ads.shtml](http://www.nodpa.com/web_ads.shtml)

### Subscribing to ODairy:

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

To sign up for the ODairy listserv, go to:

[www.nodpa.com/list\\_serv.shtml](http://www.nodpa.com/list_serv.shtml)



## Northeast Organic Milk Buyers

### Upstate Niagara

Upstate Niagara is a member owned dairy cooperative dedicated to high quality dairy products. 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

Looking for an organic milk market? Natural Dairy Products Corporation (NDP) was founded in 1995 as a family owned and operated organization producing organic dairy

products under the Natural By Nature brand name. Natural By Nature organic dairy products are produced with great care and distributed nationwide.

We are actively seeking organic, grass-based dairy producers in the southeastern PA, northern MD and DE areas. NDP pays all hauling and lab costs, and we are currently offering a signing bonus, so this is the time to call! We'd be happy to answer your questions ... please call 302-455-1261 x221 for more information.

### Dairy Marketing Services Organic

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To be listed, free, in future NE Organic Milk Buyers columns, contact Nora Owens at 413-772-0444, [noraowens@comcast.net](mailto:noraowens@comcast.net).

## The 18th Annual NODPA Field Days

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### Consider Advertising in the NODPA News

Go to page 39 for more details.

## FEATURED FARM

**HOLTERHOLM FARMS, JEFFERSON, MD**

*continued from page 1*

and you'll end up in the historic town of Harper's Ferry, West Virginia.

Salesmen leave the Holter's alone because over the past two decades Ron has conscientiously simplified his farming operation to require fewer inputs. Ron's father and Uncle ran a confinement operation, milking 100 Holsteins, from the 1960's-1990's. Ron knows how to plant corn, mix a ration, and clean a freestall, but by the mid-1990's, when he took the farm over from his father and uncle, Ron decided he wanted to do things differently.

In 1994, Ron took part in a PRO-DAIRY course through Maryland Extension. According to Ron, the class "promoted thinking outside the box." Grazing was mentioned as a possible strategy and the idea struck a chord with Ron. In 1995, he took a leap of faith and planted the entire farm to grass. The first year he grazed only heifers. Even though they were 100%

Holsteins with American genetics, Ron saw the benefits of grazing. By the next year, all of the animals were on grass.

The Holter's own 207 acres and rent close to another 100. "Except for 13 acres that is difficult to access, I consider all of our land pasture," Ron said. "We make hay on anything extra." Typically, they hay about 60-70 acres of their pasture a year. Sometimes one cutting, sometimes up to three. For winter they need 700-800 round bales of baleage and dry hay. Half is produced on the farm, and the rest purchased.

"We don't want to make hay off the same piece of pasture two years in a row," Ron explained. Preferably, he only hays a piece of pasture once every three or four years because haying removes biomass without returning nutrients.

Along with developing a rotational grazing program, Ron began shifting the genetics of the herd towards Jerseys. He also decided that he would be seasonal. "In 1997, I sold the half of the herd that was fall calving and replaced them with Jerseys



**Some of the girls**



**Ron and Adam leading a pasture walk.**

bred to calve in the spring,” Ron said. By 2006, the entire herd was Jersey. An average mature milk cow weighs 900 pounds.

Currently, they have 135 milk cows- 88 are going into the bulk tank and 38 are nurse cows. The remainder are dry cows that are due to calve outside of the optimal seasonal calving window. Ron said, “We’ll either sell them as springers or freshen them and sell them in the fall.”

They use AI for the first few heat cycles and then add a bull to the herd. First calf heifers are exclusively bull bred. Fifteen years ago, they started using polled semen and now 85% of calves are born polled. Calving begins at the end of February. 80% of the calves have been born by the end of March, and the other 20% by the end of April. The herd is dried off by Christmas. “For us,” he said, “seasonal is the best model. God created cows to calve in the spring with green grass growing. That is the pattern we wanted to follow.”

Spring seasonal calving is also important for the nurse cow program they began nine years ago. Cows calve in a bedded-pack barn but are quickly transitioned onto fresh spring grass. “When a cow calves, we want every calf to get colostrum from mama,” Ron said. “After that, we graft calves onto a nurse cow that calved the same day.” Each nurse cow feeds two calves; calves suckle for about six months.

Ron said, “We try to keep the calf pairs and their nurse cow separate for two weeks before they go into a group setting. By the second week of March, we begin putting them out on grass.” This year, the nurse cow group is 38 cows, managed in a grazing pattern separate from the milking herd. They are bull bred as well.

A cow is deemed a nurse cow if she exhibits poor behavior

*continued on page 30*





Adam and Ron milking. Photo by David Nevala for Organic Valley

## FEATURED FARM

*continued from page 29*

in the parlor or has a high somatic cell count. Some of them spend their lives as a nurse cow while others are pulled back into the milking herd. “It really is an excellent way to feed calves,” Ron said. “Not only are the calves well-adjusted to the pasture system, but we don’t have to peck around trying to get a fresh cow over mastitis. With a calf nursing them ten times a day, they get over it really quick.”

This year, Ron and Adam plan to raise 45-50 heifer calves. Typically, they raise 30 replacements but because of recent price cuts and Adam’s return to the farm full-time, they need to generate more revenue. Ron said, “Our land has healed and we can handle a slight increase in cow numbers.”

Ron and Adam also raise a large number of breeding bulls each year. They market both bulls and semen on their Purely Pastured Jerseys Facebook page. “That part of our business just sort of happened by word of mouth,” Ron said. All of the bulls they sell are polled and A2/A2 and Ron said, “I would use any of these bulls myself.” All of the bulls are descendants of the

famous New Zealand bull Beledene Dukes Landy.

Not only do they not buy seed or calf nipples, Adam and Ron don’t buy grain. Due to cost and their beliefs that cows are meant to eat only grass, the grain scoop was ratcheted down over time. Grain was entirely eliminated in 2007, long before grass-milk gained acclaim. In fact, it was only two years ago that they were able to join a grass-milk route.

Since Organic Valley maintains its own internal grass-milk standards, Holterholm Farm is not required to have any additional grass-milk certifications. “I am though, one hundred percent in favor of a grass-fed standard across the United States,” Ron said. “I do hope the standards are administered through our organic certifier rather than a new and separate third-party verification structure.” (They are certified organic by Maryland’s Department of Agriculture.)

The milk cows and nurse cows are rotationally grazed on the home farm. Weanlings and bred heifers are grazed in a separate rotation two-miles down the road. Describing the layout of the pasture system Ron said, “It’s about a mile from one end

of the farm to other and pretty much rectangular in shape. There is a major laneway that splits the farm in half and most of our paddocks are accessed from that center lane.” Dominant pasture species are orchard grass, blue grass, and fescue.

The high tensile perimeter fencing is two strands of 12.5-gauge wire. Interior fences are single strand 12.5-gauge wire and paddocks are further divided by single strands of poly-wire. 1 ¼” water lines run along the major laneway with a valve at every gate post. Water tubs are 55-gallon barrels cut in half, fitted with Jobe float valves.

The milk cows access a “salad bar” style mineral feeder on their way into and out of the parlor. There are 16 options available; the minerals come from Free Choice Enterprises. “The cows have the opportunity to pick or choose what they need,” Ron explained. “It’s amazing how they decide what they want and how it has changed over the years.” The nurse cow and heifer groups access their minerals from portable mineral feeders (made by Free Choice Enterprises).

In the spring and early summer Ron pre-clips with a double-bladed 9-foot I&J sickle bar mower leaving 5-6 inches of stubble. The German-made mower is powered by a 35-horse tractor. “It’s almost fun,” Ron said. He went to say, “I am not a tractor guy. I would rather do it with cows or by hand.”

In mid-June (when Ron was interviewed for this article) the milk cows were moving quickly through the pasture system, receiving three acres of pre-clipped pasture in the morning and three at night. “We don’t follow a particular grazing pattern,” Ron said. “We’re skipping and moving all over the place. We mix it up as much as possible to increase diversity and complexity.”

Ron prefers pre-clipping because the hoof action of the cows pushes the clippings into the top layers of the soil where there is biological activity. With post-clipping,” Ron said, “the thatch stays on the top and the nutrients in that grass are lost rather than feeding the soil.”

*continued on page 32*



**DM roller**



## FEATURED FARM

## Winter feeding



*continued from page 31*

Ron continued, "This is not your manicured golf course looking type of farm. We are trying to grow hedgerows along our permanent fence lines. In doing so, we hope to create more habitat for birds and other animals and increase biodiversity. A lot of people weed whack under fence lines but we don't. If you keep your cows full, your fences don't need to be functioning at their fullest strength."

By July they are usually done haying and pre-clipping. For the rest of the grazing season, Ron prefers to graze the pastures at 12-18 inches. "I try to leave one-third to one-half of every plant to begin building a stockpile over the entire farm," Ron said. Although there is a 92-stall freestall barn from the farm's confinement days, Ron and Adam choose to supplement the cows on pasture rather than feed them in the freestall. Ron said, "We only open the doors to the freestall for the occasional windy winter snowstorm."

Instead, they have a New Zealand-made DML round bale unroller and the cows eat their stored feeds off the ground. They maintain this system through the winter, rotating their

cows daily through the pasture system. Ideally, their winter paddocks are those from which hay was removed. This allows them to concentrate manure and forage refuse to help build soil fertility. With this method, Ron said, "At times we get impact but the land heals itself. We haven't had to reseed."

Cows average 6,000 pounds a lactation with butterfat averaging 5.1 and protein 3.7. Somatic cell count averages 175,000. Pay price in May was \$36.79/cwt. Some might question a 6,000-pound lactation but don't forget, Ron is no stranger to a TMR-fed cow making 20,000 pounds of milk.

"The big thing for me is what it brings to my pocket," he said. "I would rather make a meager amount of milk with beautiful cows and make enough profit to keep us going rather than have high numbers and lose my shirt."

*Ron and Adam can be contacted at:*

*ronholter@comcast.net*

*301-371-6101*



ment thresholds and monitoring with documentation of parasites through use of methods such as fecal monitoring and FAMA-CHA (FAffa Malan Chart—used for tracking anemia in goats and sheep).

(ii) The organic system plan is changed to prevent a similar livestock emergency in individual animals or the whole herd/flock in future years.

**Motion to adopt proposal: 13 yes; 0 no – motion passes.**

#### **Petition to add Glycolic Acid for use as a teat dip in organic livestock production**

The NOSB received a petition to add glycolic acid for use as a component of pre- and post-milking teat dips to control mastitis at §205.603(a) Synthetic substances allowed for use in organic livestock production as disinfectants, sanitizer and medical treatment as applicable).

Comments received from trade organization did not hear a clear message from its dairy members that this is absolutely necessary or that the current teat dips are not effective, but did hear that it is important to have different dips in your toolbox.

Classification as synthetic – 13 yes – motion passes.

National List Motion – 7 yes; 6 no – motion fails.

#### **2020 Sunset Review**

##### **Alcohols: ethanol, isopropanol**

**Reference: 205.603(a)** As disinfectants, sanitizer, and medical treatments as applicable

(1)(ii) Isopropanol-disinfectant only

No comments submitted. No known alternatives.

##### **Aspirin**

**Reference: 205.603(a)** As disinfectants, sanitizer, and medical treatments as applicable

(2) Aspirin-approved for health care use to reduce inflammation.

Several comments in support of relisting saying it is critical in organic livestock production.

##### **Biologics, vaccines**

**Reference: 205.603(a)** As disinfectants, sanitizer, and medical treatments as applicable

(4) Biologics - Vaccines

Subcommittee brought forward questions. Not suggesting the current listing would not be relisted, but wanted to revisit excluded methods vaccines because the previous NOSB that reviewed this put it on hold until there was a better definition for excluded methods, and we have now done that. Some questions were asked of the public about how they felt about excluded methods vaccines. Subcommittee discussions found there were inconsistencies in how certifiers were allowing or not these vaccines.

##### **Electrolytes**

**Reference: 205.603(a)** As disinfectants, sanitizer, and medical

treatments as applicable

(8) Electrolytes—without antibiotics

Comments were universally in support from certifiers and advocacy groups, NODPA, WODPA, and others agreed.

##### **Glycerin**

**Reference: 205.603(a)** As disinfectants, sanitizer, and medical treatments as applicable

(12) Glycerin - Allowed as a livestock teat dip, must be produced through the hydrolysis of fats or oils. There were comments to retain it on the national list representing all of the dairy commodity groups and certifiers. All stated glycerin is essential.

##### **Phosphoric acid**

**Reference: 205.603(a)** As disinfectants, sanitizer, and medical treatments as applicable

(20) Phosphoric acid - allowed as an equipment cleaner, Provided, That, no direct contact with organically managed livestock or land occurs.

Phosphoric acid, (H<sub>3</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>), has many uses. As a cleaner, it is generally used to remove rust and mineral deposits found on metal equipment such as boilers and steam producing equipment. In dairy operations, it is used to remove calcium and phosphate salt deposits from processing equipment.

Phosphoric acid is a hazardous substance. The exact dangers of it depend on the concentration strength of the solution, with higher concentrations presenting greater hazards. Phosphoric acid, at 85 wt. %, is considered a corrosive chemical solution that can cause, through skin exposure and inhalation, severe skin burns, permanent eye damage, sore throat, shortness of breath, and even death—among other things.

This is a consistently used material in organic dairy production.

##### **Lime, hydrated**

**Reference: §205.603(b)** As topical treatment, external parasiticide or local anesthetic as applicable

(5) Lime, hydrated—as an external pest control, not permitted to cauterize physical alterations or deodorize animal wastes.

##### **Mineral oil**

**Reference: §205.603(b)** As topical treatment, external parasiticide or local anesthetic as applicable

(6) Mineral oil - for topical use and as a lubricant.

##### **Sucrose octanoate esters**

**Reference: §205.603(b)** As topical treatment, external parasiticide or local anesthetic as applicable

(8) Sucrose octanoate esters (CAS #s-42922-74-7; 58064-47-4)—in accordance with approved labeling. Listed to control varroa mites on honey bees.

# Classified Ads

*continued from page 23*

with innovative farmers and grow a change-making model for agricultural research and education.

This position requires a B.S. in an ag or environmental science field and some prior work experience in farming and research. To learn more about the opportunity, please visit [pasafarming.org](http://pasafarming.org) or contact [jobs@pasafarming.org](mailto:jobs@pasafarming.org). Applications should be submitted before August 10th, with an anticipated October 1st start date.

## Seasonal Farm Laborer

Rodale Institute in Kutztown, PA is seeking a Seasonal Farm Laborer for its Working Tree Center location in Allentown, PA. The WTC Seasonal Farm Laborer position assists WTC Farm Manager on numerous activities such as overseeing the care and feeding of livestock, assist with lawn maintenance, landscaping, and maintain ornamental plants. This position reports to the WTC Farm Manager. This is a seasonal position that will run through November. Please send resume and cover letter to [elaine.macbeth@rodaleinstitute.org](mailto:elaine.macbeth@rodaleinstitute.org).

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### Message from the NODPA President

*continued from page 2*

changed your management and operation over the last year or so? Did you make some changes that helped your bottom line? What worked, what didn't work? We want to hear from you! As farmers, we learn the most from other farmers. This will be a major topic of discussion during the NODPA Field Days in September in Maryland. As usual, Nora has organized the two-day event to be as inexpensive as possible to make it easier for farmers to attend. So I hope you will put it on your calendar and join in the conversations during the Field Days. If you are not able to get there this year, please take a moment to add your voice by dropping us a note or an email so we can share your ideas and experiences with others during the discussions.

**Liz Bawden, NODPA President**

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# Calendar

**Tuesday, July 24, 2018 - 10:30am To 2:30pm:**  
**Improving Milk Quality and Pasture Systems**  
**JASA Family Farm, 760 Alderbrook Road, Newport, VT 05855**

Did you know that how you grazing your pastures can change your milk solids, butter fat and increase the premiums your milk buyer pays you? Join CROPP/Organic Valley staff veterinarian and grazing specialist Dr. Greg Brickner and grazing consultant Sarah Flack at this workshop focused on milk quality and ways to optimize milk value. We will tour farmer Andy (John) Andrews farm, taking a look at his pastures, discussing grazing systems and how to increase utilization of pasture to reduce feed costs as well as winter outdoor access. \$20 farmers, \$30 others; for more information contact: Kyla Bedard, EMAIL: [kyla@nofavt.org](mailto:kyla@nofavt.org)

**Wednesday, July 25, 2018 - 10:30am To 2:30pm: Robot Grazing Systems & Forage Harvesting**  
**Lambert Farm, 437 Lambert Road, Washington, VT 05675**

Grazing systems for farms using robots require a completely different design when compared to farms milking in a tie stall or parlor. Join CROPP/Organic Valley staff veterinarian and grazing specialist Dr. Greg Brickner and grazing consultant Sarah Flack on a tour of the Lambert's farm, taking a look at their robotic milking system and pastures. The Lamberts' will share how they have changed their pasture management system with the installation of robots. We will also discuss forage harvest-

ing- looking at management strategies for producing high quality forage and organic corn silage. \$20 farmers, \$30 others; for more information contact: Kyla Bedard, EMAIL: [kyla@nofavt.org](mailto:kyla@nofavt.org)

**July 25, 2018 – Wednesday, 5 to 7 p.m.: Pasture Walk at Wolfe's Neck Center for Agriculture and the Environment, Wolfe's Neck Farm, 184 Burnett Rd, Freeport, ME 04032**

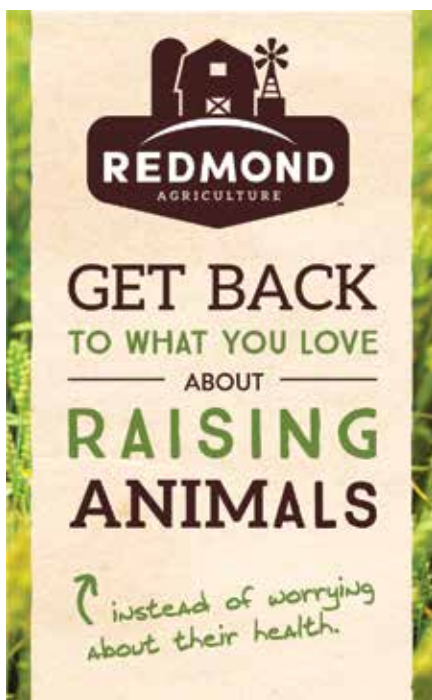
Learn about the national Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship (DGA) program and visit with apprentices on the farm. Also, learn about the organic dairy herd and the new "fly vac" system for fly control. Sponsored by Maine Grass Farmers Network. Call Diane Schivera with questions, 207-568-6022, [dianes@mofga.org](mailto:dianes@mofga.org).

**July 28, 10:00 am- 4:00pm: Open Farm Day, Madison County, NY.**

No other event gives you the opportunity to connect to local farms like Cornell Cooperative Extension of Madison County's Open Farm Day! The annual event, now in its eighth year, invites the public to tour farms of all kinds for a day of agricultural fun that's sure to offer something for everyone. Throughout Madison County, over 30 farms are graciously opening their gates to visitors to share with them their unique farm operations, giving guests the opportunity to interact with working farms. Find out more here, <https://openfarmdaymadisoncounty.com/> and download the Open Farm Day Passport.

**July 30, 2018 – Monday, 3 to 5 p.m., Pasture Walk at the farm of Fred Sherburne, 33 Town Farm Rd Dexter, ME.**

*continued on page 36*



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# Calendar

*continued from page 35*

Fred custom grazes heifers on the land that used to be an organic dairy farm. Learn some of Fred's tried and true no-nonsense methods for pasture management. Sponsored by Maine Grass Farmers Network. Contact Diane Schivera with questions, 207-568-6022, [dianes@mofga.org](mailto:dianes@mofga.org).

**July 31, 9:00 am-3:00pm: Reduced Tillage in Organic Systems Field Day, Cornell Willsboro Research Farm, 48 Sayward Lane, Willsboro, NY**

This Field Day will feature in-field demonstrations of equipment and discussions with speakers and growers. The event is open and free of cost to all, with lunch included. The first 50 attendees will receive a free program resource booklet (which will then be available to all online after the event). More information, including specific topics to be covered and speakers, contact Amy Ivy, [adi2@cornell.edu](mailto:adi2@cornell.edu) 518-570-5991 or Carly Summers, [cfs82@cornell.edu](mailto:cfs82@cornell.edu) 518-962-4810 x409.

**Monday, August 6, 2018 - 10:30am to 2:30pm: Pasture Management and Young stock Ottercrest Dairy, 80 Gibeault Road, Whiting, VT 05778**

Ever think about milking your cows just once a day instead of twice a day? This practice has pros and cons depending on each farm's unique situation. Shifting to once a day milking also takes careful planning to make it work well. Join farmer and veterinarian Brian Howlett, UVM Agronomist Heather Darby and grazing consultant Sarah Flack on a tour of Brian's farm, Ottercrest Dairy. We will take a look at his pasture systems and rotational grazing management. Brian will share strategies for parasite prevention in young stock on pasture and his experience with milking one time a day. \$20 farmers, \$30 others; for more information contact: Kyla Bedard, [kyla@nofavt.org](mailto:kyla@nofavt.org)

**Thursday, August 9, 2018 - 10:30am to 2:00pm: Pasture Resiliency Field Day, Sweet Rowan Farm, 1942 Lafont Road, West Glover, VT 05875**

Interested in finding ways to adapt your pasture system to changes in climate, to spend less on feed and to keep more of your milk check? Join us at this interactive workshop, where we'll discuss current climate science, soil health and simple changes you can make to your grazing system to increase pasture productivity and quality including learning which grasses, legumes and other species can improve pasture quality and productivity. Grazing consultant Sarah Flack will lead us on a pasture walk where we'll

practice measuring available forage per acre, calculate the acreage required to meet dry matter intake goals and talk about how to make changes in management so forage plants start growing earlier in the spring, grow better through the mid-summer and grow longer into the fall, extending your grazing season. Mike Thresher, Nutritionist with Morrison's Feed will also join us to offer practical perspective on how grazing management affects rations, protein, energy and milk production. RSVP requested by Monday, August 6th. For more information, contact Sarah Damsell (802)334-6090 x 7008 or email [sarah.damsell@vt.nacdn.net](mailto:sarah.damsell@vt.nacdn.net). COST: Free- includes lunch.

**August 10, 2018 to August 12, 2018: Cultivating the Organic Grassroots Movement, 44th NOFA Annual Summer Conference, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA**

The Northeast Organic Farming Association's Summer Conference is the community learning hub of the NOFA universe. We learn, we play, and we enjoy a weekend of skill building, inspiration and entertainment. It is our opportunity to get together and inspire one another during a family friendly weekend with people living the same lifestyle, holding the same vision and working respectively in many ways toward the same goals. More Info at [www.nofasummerconference.org](http://www.nofasummerconference.org)

**August 16, 2018: Homeopathy, 5:30 p.m. farm tour, 6 p.m. discussion. Balfour Farm, Pittsfield, ME**

Please join us in a discussion of how to effectively use homeopathy with livestock. We will use this opportunity to improve our diagnostic and repertorizing skills. Feel free to bring any case information that you're questioning, and we'll look up rubrics. We can work through your case together and, maybe, find the right remedy! Please bring any repertory or material medica you have to use for research. Discussion to be led by Jacki Perkins, MOFGA's organic dairy and livestock specialist, Diane Schivera, MOFGA's organic livestock specialist since 1988, and Henrietta Beaufait, DVM and Certified Veterinary Homeopath, the only large animal vet in Maine who is certified in classical homeopathy

**August 16, 2018 10:00am - 3:45pm: Pasture Management with Sarah Flack, Stone Barns Center, 630 Bedford Road Pocantico Hills, NY 10591**

The morning portion of this workshop will focus on creating a solid understanding of the basic principles of good grazing management systems. Starting first from the plants perspective, we will look at the needs of perennial pasture plants and how to meet those needs by following the grazing guidelines. From there we will do some group exercises and practice to learn how to measure the amount of feed in a pasture, calculate paddock sizes, stocking densities, stocking rates and understand what the ideal

*continued on page 39*

## 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.)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$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 handler/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 form AND YOUR EXEMPT FORM 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. **If you need assistance in applying for the exemption, check here \_\_\_\_\_.** 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: \_\_\_\_\_

## ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

### From the MODPA Treasurer

**G**reetings from the Midwest, I would love to say that it has been a good summer so far but overall it has been okay at best. Our weather situation has been one of late and later. I recently toured most of Northern Wisconsin and the crop conditions vary tremendously. For every field of corn that looks to be in excellent shape there is another that is poor or worse yet still unplanted. We have had plenty of moisture which has made for good pasture conditions but has really been hard on the hay and the rest of field crops. There is still plenty of first crop hay to be made when we should be looking at starting second crop. Small grains have struggled and look weedy. I think that we will probably have plenty of feed for the coming winter but the quality will not be what most hope for.

Now for the ugly gorilla in the room. Most milk checks have taken a beating the last 6 months; I have had reports of final pay prices under \$20. This is not acceptable or sustainable. The old attitude of tighten your belt and get more efficient is not going to cut it any more. I have seen whole organic herds sent to the auction barn. To make matters worse, when they have been sent there the organic premium that we have come to expect has not been paid. The only place that I have seen any premium is in cull cows and even then it is not what it should be. It appears that the processors are hell bent on taking organic down the same path that conventional is on. I have received reports of producers being forced into situations that they should not be put in. We have put our faith in the processors doing their job right and they have failed us miserably. I have no clear cut answer on how to deal with this situation but I do firmly believe that it will have to start at the farmgate. While it may hurt to keep a handle on our production it will hurt more to continue to allow price reductions because of overproduction. Conventional dairy is showing us what happens when you try to produce more for less. We cannot go down that path. We are already on it but I think we still have the chance to correct it. However that chance is getting more distant every day that we do not take action. Unfortunately, we will likely see more producers exit the business as we try to get things corrected. But we must do all that we can to secure a future for the next generations.

I encourage each and every one of you to get active and do your part to help with this. Please reach out to those of us at MODPA or your favorite ODPAs if you have suggestions or questions. Past experience has shown that we can move in the right direction if we work together. There is no time to waste; our collective futures are at stake.

I wish all of you the best as our harvest season gets underway. May your harvest be bountiful, but more importantly, may it be safe. Remember to get your rest; after all we are no good if we get hurt on the job. Make time for your families; they are the ones who will be there through thick and thin, good times and not so good times. Without them, life can get awfully lonely.

Stop and smell the clover and may your blessings be many,

**Bruce Drinkman, MODPA Treasurer**  
**3253 150th Avenue, Glenwood City, WI 54013**  
**715-781-4856; bdrinkman@hotmail.com**

### 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  
 greenbfrms@tzn.net  
 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  
 Garnaville, 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



# Calendar

*continued from page 36*

number of acres for a flock or herd is. We will then look at some real on farm examples to practice and learn more about perennial plant anatomy and physiology.

In the afternoon, we will look at pasture from the livestock perspective, learning techniques to meet their nutritional needs, maximize pasture dry matter intake, provide low stress handling, provide the correct supplemental feeds and minerals, and when shade or shelter should be planned into grazing. We will also spend time in the afternoon discussing techniques to monitor and assess the health of the pasture ecosystem, and the performance and the well-being of the livestock.

This session will include indoor classroom time and outdoor time in the pastures. You will want to bring clothing to be comfortable both indoors and outdoors in rain or sun. Bring a calculator and notebook.

COST: \$25. Questions: [laurief@stonebarnscenter.org](mailto:laurief@stonebarnscenter.org)

**Thursday, September 12th and 13th: Grass-Fed Workshop and Pasture Walk: Lessons we can Learn from the Pasture, Green Heron Growers, Sherman (Chautauqua County), NY**

Joining us will be renowned pasture consultant Sarah Flack, Dr. Silvia Abel-Caines, Ruminant Nutritionist for Organic Valley/ CROPP, Steve Gabriel with the Finger Lakes Permaculture Institute and Jonathan Zeiset, Zeiset Ag Consulting. This event will be an in-depth look at pasture forages and how to create diversity in your pasture while supplying your animals with the proper nutrition for increased weight gains in beef and increasing milk components in your milk. Our emphasis will be on building high quality, low cost forages, increasing the diversity in the forage selection and building the microbial population in your soils. We also plan to look at ways to improving your net income by utilizing all of your pasture resources including the use of "silvo-pasture" woodland grazing. The Heron facilities offer patrons the opportunity to camp in our spacious 300 plus acres of woodlands or open meadow camper friendly areas. For more details on this workshop, go to: [www.grassfedworkshop.eventbrite.com](http://www.grassfedworkshop.eventbrite.com) or call Steve at 716-720-3695.

**September 19, 2018: Southeast PA Graziers' Full day Meeting with Alan Savory, Martindale Center, 352 Martindale Road, Ephrata, PA 17522.**

Savory will be telling his life story and sharing with us how and why the principles of holistic resource management make sense for the world we live in today. This will be an opportunity to catch the vision from one of the founders of the Holistic

Resource Movement. Alan Savory was catapulted to the front line position on this subject when he gave a TED (Technology, Education and Design) Talk in 2013, entitled, 'How to Fight Desertification and Reverse Climate Change'. Registration, which includes lunch, is \$75.00 and you can send a check to Lancaster Co. Graziers, 1142 Gap Road, Kinzers, PA 17535. If you have questions, please call or text Roman Stoltzfoos at 717-278-1070. We are expecting a large crowd, so please register early.

**September 27 & 28, 2018: Tools for Survival: Weathering the Current Dairy Crisis While Maintaining Organic Integrity, The 18th Annual NODPA Field Days, Yarrowsburg Mennonite Church, Knoxville, Maryland 21758**

For full details, please see the full article and educational program in this July NODPA News, pages \_\_\_\_\_. This is the first year we have brought the NODPA Field Days to Maryland and are very excited about this very welcoming setting. This is also the first year where we are offering an early-bird rate for those who register by Wednesday, September 19th. You can still pay in-person, if you prefer, but you must let us know that you are planning to attend (by phone, email or mail) by September 19th. For more information or if you have questions about sponsoring or exhibiting at the 18th Annual NODPA Field Days, contact NODPA Field Days coordinator Nora Owens any time at [noraowens@comcast.net](mailto:noraowens@comcast.net) or 413-772-0444.

## 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.

**2018 Ad rates and sizes listed below.**

**Deadline for advertising in the  
September, 2018 issue is August 15, 2018.**

**Full Page Ad (7.5" W x 10.25" H) = \$660**

**1/2 Page Ad (7.5" W x 4.5" H) = \$340**

**1/4 Page Ad (3.5" W x 4.75" H) = \$190**

**1/8 Page Ad/Business Card:**

**(3.5" W x 2.25" H) = \$100**

**Commit to a full year of print advertising and get 10 percent discount: Full: \$600, Half: \$306, Quarter: \$171, Eighth: \$90.**

**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 (NODPA)**

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

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