NODPA News

Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance

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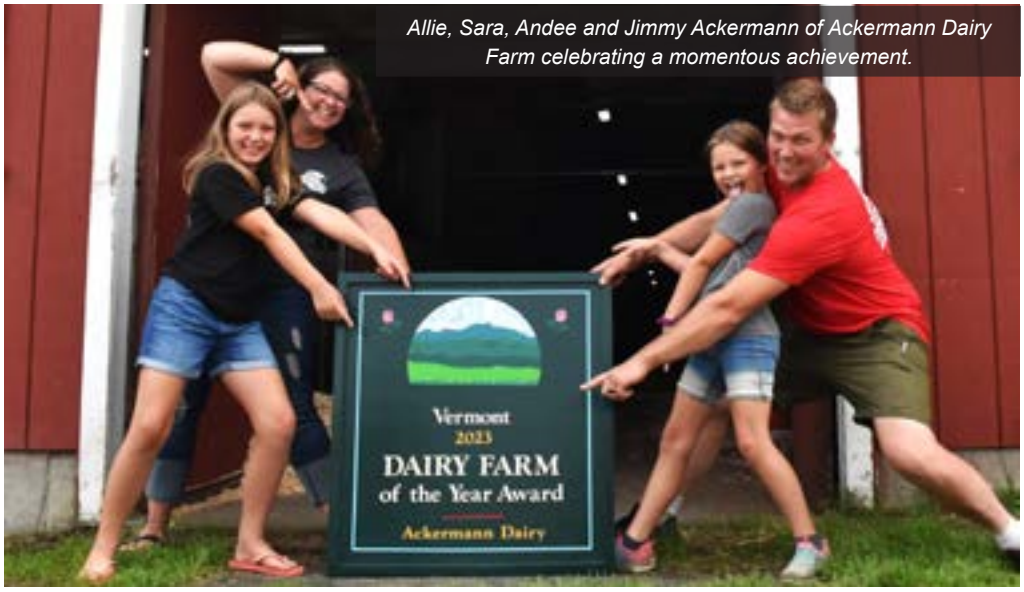
Member Info

The Annual NODPA Fund Drive is Underway! Your support is especially important, so please remember to send in your donations or visit the NODPA membership page on our website: https://nodpa.com/index.cfm?p=x.5

For more information: email Nora Owens, noraowens@comcast.net or call 413-772-0444



Allie, Sara, Andee and Jimmy Ackermann of Ackermann Dairy Farm celebrating a momentous achievement.

FEATURED FARM: ACKERMANN DAIRY FARM

HARDWICK, VT • Owned and operated by Jimmy and Sara Ackermann

Reaping the Rewards: Award-winning Dairy

By Tamara Scully, NODPA News Contributing Writer

How does a dairy farm win an award? Do they have the highest milk production per cow? The lowest cull rate? The least amount of lameness or mastitis? Or maybe they've bred cows with great genetics or grown the most nutritious hay.

If the award is the Vermont Dairy Farmer of the Year for 2023, then the award was earned through a combination of hard work and sustainable business practices, and given to a dairy that is an exemplary overall example

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The O DAIRY Act and USDA AMS Survey

How the process works and what the details are plus a survey from USDA AMS Organic Data Initiative on what production data reports you want to have available.

There are plenty of stories about the myth and mystery of how legislation is put together. With the O DAIRY Act, which was introduced October 19th 2023, NODPA was an integral part of the process over the last decade. Read all the details of the Act on page 16 and how it reached the Senate Agriculture Committee for consideration.

The USDA Agriculture Marketing Service Dairy Market Reports and the Organic Data Initiative reached out to NODPA with a survey on what reports producers want them to publish. Since the survey would be electronic, we shared the fact that many producers had no or very spotty internet coverage and offered space in the NODPA News printed edition to get the response from all producers. That survey is in the center pages (pages 18-20) and can be pulled out and sent in or faxed. **Please take part in the survey.**

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Message from NODPA Co-Presidents

I'd like to thank everyone who came to the recent NODPA Field Days. We had a great turnout this year and two very good pasture walks and some very informative and thought provoking presentations. I very much enjoyed the opportunity to commune with other farmers and see many different perspectives. It's always nice to have a chance to get away from the farm, even if only to go see other farms and different management practices. Seeing many different pasture rest periods and grazing tactics on the pasture walks, was very informative. Also, the concept of second generation plants from self-reseeding resulting in a plant better adapted to its growing environment, along with a better nutrition profile, was very interesting to me. I look forward to hearing more about it and will be looking into ways to incorporate some of the concepts into our farm. I would love to see some research on this subject.

I would like to welcome both Roman Stolzfus as the new Co-President of NODPA and Eric Sheffer as Vice President. It's important that NODPA can continue its work as one of the few farmer-led organic dairy groups. We have no outside interests, only the well-being of and a fair, healthy market for organic dairy farmers that we and our members are. To do that, we need to have active members in leadership roles and regional reps. We are always looking for more interested farmers to help lead NODPA into the future, so if you might be interested, please get in touch.

Lastly, I would like to thank Liz Bawden for her many, many years of service to us as NODPA's President and later Co-President. Thanks for stepping up and filling that very important role.

Kirk Arnold, NODPA Co-President
Truxton, NY | Phone: 607-842-6631, Email: kickaha21@gmail.com

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Words from the Wise: NODPA Field Days Sessions Summaries: *Six Principles of Soil Health and Profitability: Putting the Foundations into Practice*

By Tamara Scully, NODPA News Contributing Writer

Sometimes positive change happens when a few brave souls are willing to step out of the stall, ruminate over the business at hand, and implement a plan to grow greener - and more profitable - pastures. By recognizing that business as usual might be the very thing preventing success, these innovators seek to better understand where they are at - and how and why they are there - and to chart an improved path by changing the manner in which business is conducted.

In the case of organic dairy farming, Roman Stoltzfoos, of Springwood Organic Farm in Kinzers, Pennsylvania, put his organic farming philosophy into practice in 1987, and was one of the first four organic dairy producers in the United States. He's been learning, growing, innovating and sharing his trials and successes ever since. Roman spoke at the recent NODPA 2023 Field Days, presenting "The Six Principles of Soil Health: Where profit comes from and how to increase it every year."

Also focusing on profit was Alvin Peachey, of Saddlers Run Farm in Allensville, Pennsylvania, whose farm was also open for Field Day tours. Alvin and his wife Marianne made numerous changes on the family dairy about ten years ago, leading to enhanced profitability and growth of their dairy operation. Alvin shared their journey towards profitability over two sessions, focused on the foundations of profitability and putting those foundations into place.

Expert Experience

Roman believes fully in organic farming, and organic farmers. "We have a future and it's a good one," he said. "If you have the privilege of growing up around your children and grandchildren you shouldn't be complaining about anything."

Whether organic or not, Roman emphasized that all farmers need to focus on the six principles of soil health in order to succeed. By doing so, the life of the soil won't be depleted by farming practices. Because the soil is the key to farming success, enhancing soil health will increase profitability, too.

"Your soil will never argue with you. It's going to play the last card. But if you don't treat it right, you're going to be in trouble. None of us would survive on our farms without some application of the six principles of soil health," Roman said.

Roman encouraged farmers to change the way they think. The energy, soil, water and mineral cycles, as well as ecosystem diversity, are four key cycles which farmers must understand in order to apply the six principles of soil health: context, minimize disturbance, living roots, soil cover, and diversity. Millions of live critters are working for you in each handful of soil. Abiding by these six principles will keep soil life thriving.

Roman learned a lot at a soil health seminar held on a large, conventional 2500 head dairy farm. The farmer was doing a lot of things right, like having a anaerobic manure digester, no-till farming and planting cover crops. The dairy farmer was planting rye cover crops via no-till drilling immediately after harvesting corn for silage or grain. He injected manure into the soil with a hose dragline, avoiding compaction and disturbance. He used very little nitrogen (N) on his corn crop. "The less N you can use the better you are taking care of your soil. N burns organic matter," Roman said.

This conventional dairy farm's soil profile on the Haney test was in the 99th percentile and "higher than mine. The water infiltration rate was amazing," Roman said. It all led him to wonder "why this guy can have better soil than me?"

Despite those enviable soil health profiles, Roman realized that the conventional dairy farmer was not doing the one thing that would improve his soils and profitability even more if only he would implement it. But he wouldn't, and therefore he couldn't take the next step and optimize soil health - and therefore his profit - by grazing his 1200 cow herd.

"A herd of cows is an amazing thing if you can use them out there. And he wasn't using them," Roman said. If he had been willing to do so, compaction would have been reduced on his soils. The benefit of adding grazing animals to land is enormous."

But within the context of that large, conventional dairy farm, grazing wasn't considered.

"You are your own farm. You have your own unique opportunities," Roman said. "You're going to take that and make something out of it and if you understand the six principles that is going to help you a lot."

Keeping the soil undisturbed will allow more forage to grow. Keeping the soil covered at all times is crucial. Weeds are just plants we don't know what to do with, and thinking of them as forbs will help, rather than focusing on tearing up the ground and reseeding.

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Diversity is key and having a dozen or more common grasses in the pastures will help with milk quality.

"Seed is not the key to success. Eliminate or cut down your seed bill," Roman said, by working with what is in the pasture by following the six principles of soil health and by managing your grazing to get the best resiliency through animal action.

Getting Rested

"Growing healthy animals and plants together is a cinch. It's almost automatic with your management," Roman said. "You need to learn how to leverage your advantages."

On his own farm, which he operates with his partner and son, Dwight, resilience meant learning to properly rest pastures, and not disturbs soils. An example of how effective proper rest periods and avoiding soil disturbance can be was illustrated by success they've had overcoming different challenges.

One February, the cows were grazing, and several days of rain left the fields damaged. They decided to no-till drill festulolium, meadow fescue, oats, a bit of alfalfa to try to correct damage, Roman explained. They also left a non-seeded test strip, allowing what seeds were already in the pasture to grow back naturally.

The entire field was not grazed, to provide it time to recover. They lightly grazed the second year, and by the fifth year, the field was fully recovered, and "has been amazing ever since. It happens sometimes and if you don't re-abuse it with a disc or plow, it will be okay."

"There is some real advantage in giving it the proper rest. And that is completely missing from a soil problem on a conventional farm," where fields are continually plowed or disced, he said. "Out West, they understand what rest does to soil. It's much more critical than you think. Rest soils, and you will see seeds come that you've never seen before and will be palatable. A plant that is grown on your soil, and drops seed in your soil, has more nutrients in that plant than if you bought it."

In rested areas, the grasses grow thicker and the pastures are much more diverse. Even thistle has no chance to take over in fields that they've properly rested. They don't normally pull thistle or other weeds on the farm, and they also don't worry about them, and have no concerns. A well-rested field, filled with diversity allows beneficial plants to set seeds, and keep thistle or other weeds in control. "The unwanted plants' species there are trying to fix something in your

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Words from the Wise

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soil. I think grazing and rest is going to be the key to making it into something you want," Roman said.

Fields that have yielded poorly despite being well-drained and fertile have also benefitted from a rest. Removing cows for a year when pastures are over-grazed or just not producing, can give a field a rest it needs to regenerate itself. "Now this is a tool you can use without spending any money," Roman said of not grazing a field so it can have an extended rest period. "What would it cost you to not have the feed from this plot?"

Roman gave another example of positive results obtained by resting fields. He planned to winter graze a field, and stopped taking hay off of it in August. Then, after allowing the cows to graze on March 1st and May 1st, he still took a "massive cutting of hay" off the field, owing to the rest period the field had between the last hay cutting and the winter grazing.

Their cows have grazed through the snow to get to the grass underneath. They've winter grazed without having to feed hay at all in January, and then feed hay along with the grass in February.

"It looks lazy... but the power of disruption and diversity and compounding all in one fell swoop," is powerful, and rest accomplishes that, Roman said. "Disruption, diversity and compounding are all key to making this work. I want to have you see that our approach to soil is something that will work on your farm."

Peachey Outlook

Alvin Peachey's "Peachey Lean Model" to dairy farm success values efficiency, and relies on effective practices which optimize and maximize a farm's resources. To be profitable, farmers must focus on some core principles.

Alvin advises that farmers start small when trying out a new concept, and if it works, to build on it to optimize results. Each farm is unique, and implementing practices with your own particular circumstances and goals in mind is crucial.

"It's a good idea to ask, "what is causing us stress?" and be willing to adapt in our context to decrease that stress," Alvin said. Usually, there is a resource out there to help with whatever is needed.

There are consequences to making changes, and each decision has compound effects, never one single one. When making a decision, Alvin said, farmers need to think about out what the ripple effect

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could be. For example, when improving genetics, it isn't simply about one trait.

Maximizing and optimizing outcomes involve making the most of your resources, whether labor, equipment or natural resources such as water and pasture. Planting high production fields to high quality grasses is an example of maximizing pastures, and keeping soil covered at all times maximizes solar and water capacity. Genetics can help maximize milk production. Measuring outcomes and tracking finances are essential. Production needs to be tracked and record keeping needs to be done, and to be utilized in decision-making. Milk checks are a cash resource, and getting a bigger milk check without having higher costs is the goal.

"Our time is worth something," Alvin said, and farm chores can be made more efficient.

Groundwork for Profit

Soil health is required for resiliency and profitability and successful farmers must give back to the soil, and not simply take from it. Partnering with nature provides a better chance to be profitable. Increasing carbon in soil, attracting more insects, birds and predators to the farm, and improving grass, soil and animal health and nutrition all go hand-in-hand, the way nature was designed, he said.

Alvin believes that 70 percent of success is rooted in pasture management and understanding regenerative agriculture. Another 20 percent is the impact of Mother Nature, and fertilizing or other means of boosting production account for a mere 10 percent.

Although Alvin also sells fertilizer, he won't sell to a grazer unless they are willing to enhance their grazing management to increase yields. Fertilizing fields without focusing on management is quickest way to financial ruin, he said. Resting paddocks is a key to soil health and fertility. For the first five years, he didn't understand the importance of rest.

Saddlers Run Farm, established in 2010, switched to no-grain feeding in 2018, and has increased their herd size. As a result, they are milking more cows, fed 100 percent grass, for the same overhead. They've focused on their grazing management to maximize dry matter production per acre, and they exclusively graze all of their fields, purchasing in any supplemental forages needed. And by

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Words from the Wise

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purchasing only high quality organic baleage, they have increased herd health and productivity.

In 2016, when he was still growing corn, alfalfa and summer annuals using minimal tillage, the organic matter on the farm was at 3.63 percent. He tried adding fertilizer, and even irrigating fields to increase yields, without success. In 2019, they began to practice tall grazing, with longer rest periods prior to re-entry.

"I do believe that pasture management will have the biggest impact on the financial progress on our farm," Alvin said. "That gives us a huge responsibility of managing our pastures"

Increasing rotations from the 21 days they had been using to the 45 -50 days they now use resulted in organic matter increases. In 2021, the soil test average for organic matter across the entire farm was 4.95. The highest level was 7.92, representing "a huge increase in the entire farm in two years," he said.

"I know one thing. If you extend your rotation from 21 days, like we were the first six or seven years of farming, up to about 45 days and even 50 days rotation, you get a dramatic increase in yield. The biggest challenge is what about quality. Can we maintain our quality?" Alvin said. "All these things are things we have to think about when we want to think about improving our pasture production."

Financial gains due to higher yields on pasture are one of the key components of success. If a producer can increase their dry matter per acre yield by one ton, then they can raise 10 more cows for 210 day on 100 percent grass on the same acreage, all due to the yield increase, effectively cutting cost per cow while increasing that milk check.

"We had a total of 88 cows, all milking, and down to 65 grazing acres," with the rest of the fields being rested, he said. "Our purchased feed cost per cow is same as it was when we had 20 cows on this farm."

Alvin's general philosophy of tall grazing is to graze 50 or 60 percent of the grass, and trample the rest, but it varies depending on growing conditions.

"Taking the best and trampling the rest," depends on time of year, he said. "You can't do the same every grazing throughout the summer."

Microbes in the soil cycle nutrients, and in the process they aerate the soil. Healthy, aerated

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soil "exhales" in the evening, and carbon dioxide is released as an end-product of this metabolism. Grazing enhances nutrient cycling.

"Carbon dioxide is the biggest limiting factor to increasing yield or production," Alvin said. Enhancing soil microbial health through grazing management will enhance nutrient cycling and pasture yields.

Mature grasses with seed heads are not the enemy, and can play a beneficial role in pasture nutrition.

"When did we get smarter than nature? Why till up and seed again? Use these seed heads to your advantage. The thicker the sward, the less seed heads," Alvin said. "The next generation grass is higher in quality than what you planted, and the seeds dropped by the grasses already adapted to your farm's unique soil epigenetics will enhance the quality of the pastures."

With a focus on pasture management, they have significantly increased yields and increased the farm's milk output without adding costs. Grazing all of their pastures and purchasing in all their feeds is a means of maximizing and optimizing. Their purchased feed cost is not more than the cost of harvesting. By investing in animals, not equipment, they've been able to become more efficient, and reduce costs per hundredweight of milk shipped.

Management affects profitability, Alvin said. Making choices to maximize efficiency, such as purchasing a bale roller, which allows them to feed hay in about five minutes, was a worthy investment. They move round bales with a forklift, which is also used to bed the free stall barn. Manure gets exported off farm, not spread. "We're not seeing a huge yield increase where we spread the manure and where we don't," but they plan to keep watching this, Alvin said.

The Peachey Lean Model acknowledges that "nature always wins," and working with nature is the path to profitability. "I'm just proposing to you to think about some of these steps when you go about your daily farm life."

Adapting within your own context, working with nature, focusing on soil health, and the willingness to try something different are all tools dairy grazers can utilize to continually improve their profitability. Sustaining the dairy requires that soil stewardship - and the improved yields and nutrient content that result - remains the focus, and grazing management is the key that unlocks that door to dairy farming profitability. ◆

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Pay and Feed Prices November 2023

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) reports of estimated organic fluid product sales nationally for July and August 2023 show an increase in the sale of packaged fluid products of 2.5 percent over 2022 year-to-date. Class 1 utilization of organic fluid milk in the northeast increased by 15.1-million-pound year-to-date, January-September 2023, over the same period in 2022; a 5 per cent increase. US sales of organic fluid milk products in July 2023 were 230 million pounds, an increase of 0.7 percent from July 2022, and in August 2023 they were 247 million pounds, up 2.5 percent from August 2022. In July 2023, fluid organic Whole Milk sales of 116 million pounds were up 7.3 percent compared to a year earlier. Reduced fat milk sales were 112 million pounds, down 4.9 percent from the previous year. August 2023 organic Whole Milk fluid sales were 124 million pounds, up 6.8 percent from June 2022. Organic Reduced Fat milk fluid sales in August 2023 were 122 million pounds, down 1.6 percent from August 2022. The average retail price for organic milk in August 2023 was $4.86 per half gallon, and in the same period in 2022 it was $4.67 per half gallon. Anecdotal reports suggest that supply of organic milk is short in the northeast and Pennsylvania, and that spot milk, when available, is at $40/cwt. There are reports that organic brands are pursuing spot milk rather than taking on extra farms or increasing pay price to a level that reflects costs of production across the country.

Product Name	Sales of Organic Fluid Milk		Change from	
	Jul-23	2023 Year to date	Jul-22	Year to date
	Million pounds		Percent	
Organic Whole Milk	116	807	7.3%	3.6%
Flavored Whole milk	1	5	-42.3%	-57.4%
Organic Reduced Fat Milk (2%)	77	536	2.3%	-3.9%
Organic Low-Fat Milk (1%)	18	158	-19.5%	-8.3%
Organic Fat Free Milk Skim	12	89	-6.2%	-11.4%
Organic Flavored Fat-Reduced Milk	6	45	-28.8%	-5.9%
Other Fluid Organic Milk Products	0	2	15.2%	179.2%
Total Fat Reduced Milk	112	828	-4.9%	-5.7%
Total Organic Milk Products	230	1642	**0.7%**	**-1.7%**

Product Name	Sales of Organic Fluid Milk		Change from	
	Aug-23	2023 Year to date	Aug-22	Year to date
	Million pounds		Percent	
Organic Whole Milk	124	931	6.80%	4.0%
Flavored Whole milk	1	6	13.20%	-52.60%
Organic Reduced Fat Milk (2%)	79	615	0.40%	-3.4%
Organic Low-Fat Milk (1%)	25	183	2.50%	-7.0%
Organic Fat Free Milk Skim	12	100	-13.40%	-11.7%
Organic Flavored Fat-Reduced Milk	7	52	-15.10%	-7.2%
Other Fluid Organic Milk Products	0	2	69%	164.7%
Total Fat Reduced Milk	122	950	-1.60%	-5.2%
Total Organic Milk Products	**247**	**1889**	**2.50%**	**-1.10%**

Federal Milk Market Order 1, in New England, reports utilization of types of organic milk by pool plants. It's important to know that we do not know how much organic milk is being sold at retail that comes from outside the order, which is currently not part of the detailed report. This is categorized in the reports as *Class I out of Marketing Area*, but not separated by organic or conventional. While the total milk utilized in the area is accurate, the organic is probably underreported as it would not report packaged organic milk from other FMMO's. Currently, there are two other Federal Orders (F.O.) that report the monthly breakdown of organic milk, Mideast F.O.33 and Central F.O.32; a total of three out of 11 federal orders. These 3 orders have the highest volume of fluid milk utilization. California (F.O.51) is also within the top 5 of F.O. reporting fluid volumes utilized under Class 1, but only reports some organic data in its monthly bulletin, but no monthly breakdown.

FMMO 1 reports that in August 2023, fluid organic whole milk utilization totaled 18.14 million pounds, up from 16.19

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UTILIZATION OF ORGANIC FLUID MILK PRODUCTS AND CREAM BY POOL PLANTS (Million pounds) in Federal Order 1 (northeast)

	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2023	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2022	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2021	Fluid retail Organic Milk 2020	Increase/Decrease of 2023 over 2022	Increase/Decrease of 2022 over 2021	Increase/Decrease of 2021 over 2020
JANUARY	37.00	29.14	31.32	23.93	26.97%	-7%	31%
FEBRUARY	31.65	33.65	31.56	26.69	-5.94%	7%	18%
MARCH	37.37	31.56	31.87	27.90	18.41%	-1%	14%
APRIL	31.51	33.23	28.97	29.35	-5.18%	15%	-1%
MAY	36.24	30.49	29.72	28.25	18.86%	3%	5%
JUNE	34.59	31.53	28.41	26.90	9.71%	11%	6%
JULY	30.75	29.44	25.50	26.70	4.45%	15%	-4%
AUGUST	33.75	32.12	27.18	24.70	5.06%	18%	10%
SEPTEMBER	28.32	35.00	30.26	29.70	-19.09%	16%	2%
OCTOBER		34.83	29.47	25.78		18%	14%
NOVEMBER		31.13	31.07	24.47		0.18%	27%
DECEMBER		33.78	31.36	28.13		8%	11%
ANNUAL		385.90	356.68	322.50		8%	11%

UTILIZATION OF ORGANIC FLUID MILK PRODUCTS AND CREAM BY POOL PLANTS (Million pounds) in FMMO 32 (Central)

Month	2023	2023 distributed within the order	2023 distributed outside the order	
March	52.73			
April	49.18	5.64	43.53	
May	48.21	5.40	42.78	
June	45.20	5.57	39.63	
July	48.45	5.70	43.64	
August	48.47	5.63	42.85	

million pounds the previous year. The utilization of fluid organic reduced fat milk, 15.61 million pounds, decreased from 15.93 million pounds a year ago. In September 2023, the fluid whole milk utilization totaled 14.67 million pounds, a decrease from 17.61 million pounds from September 2022. For fluid organic reduced fat milk, the 13.65 million pounds in fluid utilization in September 2023 was a decrease from the 17.40 million in September 2022. Year-to-date, January to September 2023 compared with 2022 for organic fluid milk in FMMO 1, shows 2023 at 301.18 million pounds and 2022 at 286.16 million pounds, an increase of approximately 5% year over year. This increase is driven by an 11% increase in whole milk against a 1% decrease in reduced fat utilization. Organic fluid milk utilization is approximately 4.65% of the total fluid milk utilization within FMMO 1 for September 2023, not including the packaged Class1 milk coming into the area. Approximately 18% of Class 1 milk utilized in FMMO is from packaged milk outside the area.

Central F.O. 32 is the only order that reports the breakdown as to the volume of Class 1 organic milk that is used in the Order and what is used outside the Order. F.O. 32 includes Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and South Dakota. In every month reported, organic packaged milk distributed outside the F.O. 32 order is more than the total recorded Class 1 organic milk in F.O. 1. As usual, we are asking for greater detail to define how much Class 1 organic milk is brought into any individual F.O.

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Pay and Feed Prices

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In recent reports from NOFA-New York certified livestock auctions in New York, organic cull cows traded on average the same as conventional cows in September and October. The average price for the conventional cull cows was $87 per hundredweight in September and October, compared to an average price of $91 per hundredweight for organic cull cows. The auctions that are reporting on organic sales are Empire Livestock Auctions at Vernon, Pavilion and Dryden and Hoskins Sales. If there are any more please let me know.

Update on DMC

While considerably lower than the previous month's payouts, a Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) payment was triggered once again for September 2023. At just $1.06 per cwt., the September DMC margin triggers an indemnity payment at the $9.50 level but not at level 2. The payment for August 2023 was $3.04 per cwt. Premium alfalfa hay fell to $288 per ton, and corn slipped from $4.73 per bushel in August 2023 to $5.21 average in September 2023. Soybean meal dropped from $438.80 per ton to $411.07 in September, making feed costs of $12.56/cwt. The All-Milk Price for September 2023 was $21/cwt. The projections for October through the end of the year are for no DMC payments with the forecast for the All-Milk Price increasing and the feed cost remaining at the same level or decreasing.

News: CROPP Cooperative Pay Price

Several producers have reported an increase in the CROPP pay price which is shown in the table below which starts to bring their pay price into line with other milk buyers in the area who have already increased pay price, for example, Upstate Niagara and Lactalis/Stonyfield:

There is currently a $0.50/cwt MAP in place for the West region through December 2023.

This new program increases the West MAP to $1.50/cwt for November and December 2023

	Nov-Dec 2023 Total MAP's	2024 base pay increase	2024 MAP's	2024 Total Pay Price Increase
West Division	$ 1.50	$ 1.00	$ 1.00	$ 2.00
Midwest		$ 0.50		$ 0.50
Mideast		$ 0.50		$ 0.50
Northeast & Southeast	$ 0.50	$ 0.50	$ 0.50	$ 1.00
New England	$ 1.50	$ 0.50	$ 1.50	$ 2.00

For some organic contracts, the October milk price calculations may be influenced by the value of butterfat has increased while the value of protein fell substantially. The value of butterfat increased to $3.71 per pound, which makes for the third straight month that butterfat has been above $3 per pound. Milk protein decreased to $1.05 per pound, which is the lowest per pound cost seen in recent years.

CROPP Cooperative appointed Shawna Nelson as the farmer-owned cooperative's new executive vice president of membership (EVP) starting effective October 23, 2023. The current EVP of Membership Travis Forgues begins his transition to Hidden Springs Creamery and their family farm on Nov. 3rd. "After 25 years as a part of Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative, wearing both farmer and leadership hats, I'm eager to shift focus to my family farm and our artisan sheep dairy and cheeses, Hidden Springs Creamery," Forgues said. Nelson was born and raised in the same Driftless area where CROPP is based and has been at the company since 2005. Nelson is advancing her role at CROPP from her previous position as vice president of dairy pool, where she oversaw membership functions that directly impacted the dairy pool of the cooperative, including hauling, regional pool management, scheduling, forecasting, milk handlers and dairy payroll. Nelson will now be responsible for the cooperative's 'farmer-member touchpoints' and all the farmer pools within the organization.

Travis Forgues was a founding member of NODPA and has worked tirelessly for the benefit of organic dairy producers and CROPP Cooperative. We wish him every success as he transitions to the next stage of his life.

Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP)

On September 21st the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) responded to pressure from producer groups to make a second round of ODMAP payments for all producers that were previously approved for ODMAP. The additional payment of the remaining 25 percent of the ODMAP enrolled production was paid automatically and will require no further action by producers. The ODMAP enrollment period started on May 15, 2023, and ended August 11, 2023. Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) funds of $104 million were available for ODMAP assistance and were subject to availability of funding. According to the ODMAP Notice of Funds Availability (NFA),

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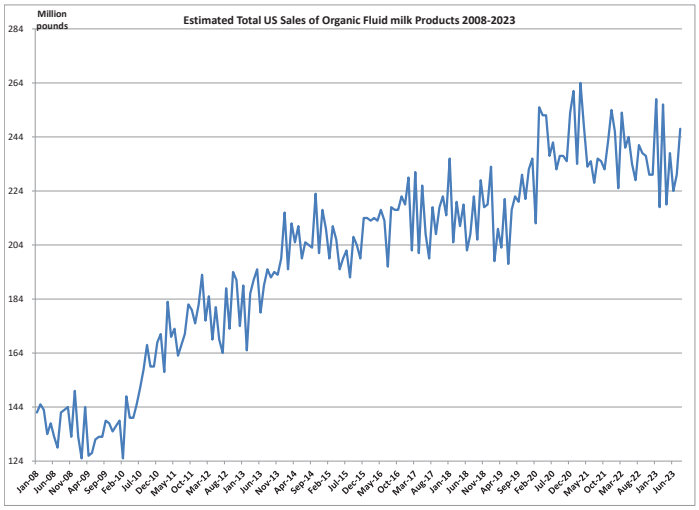

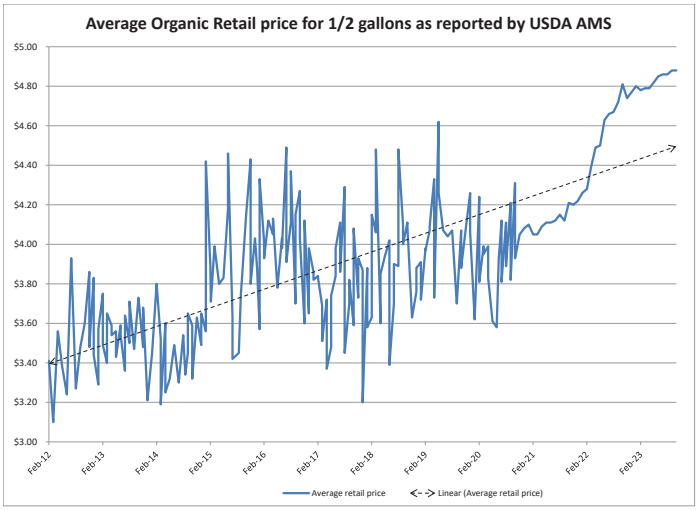

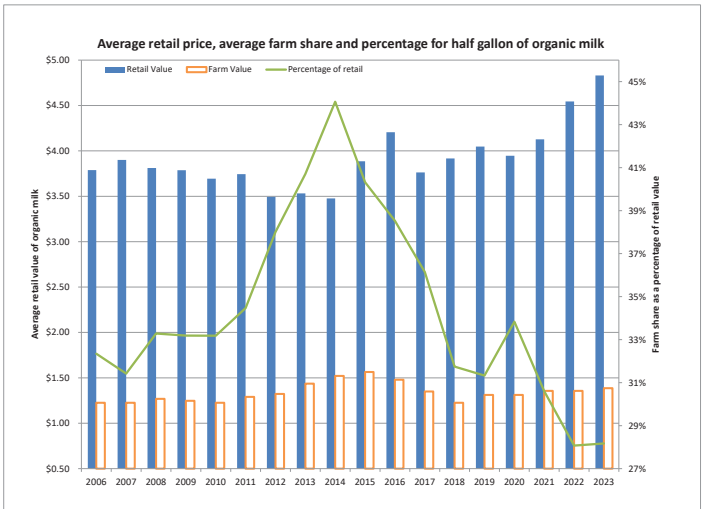

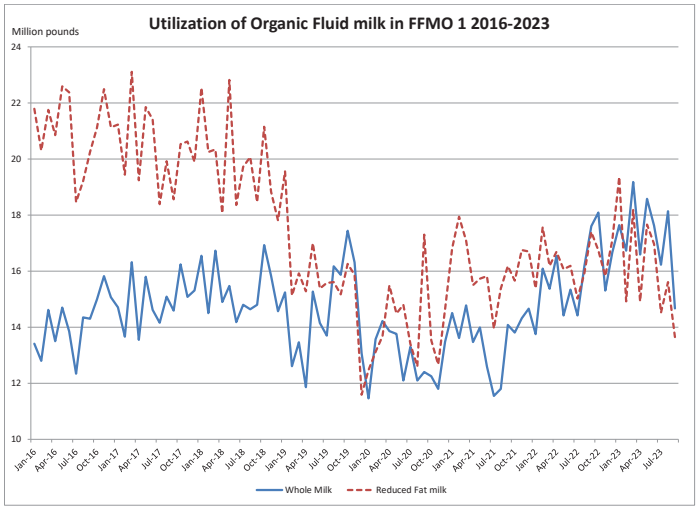

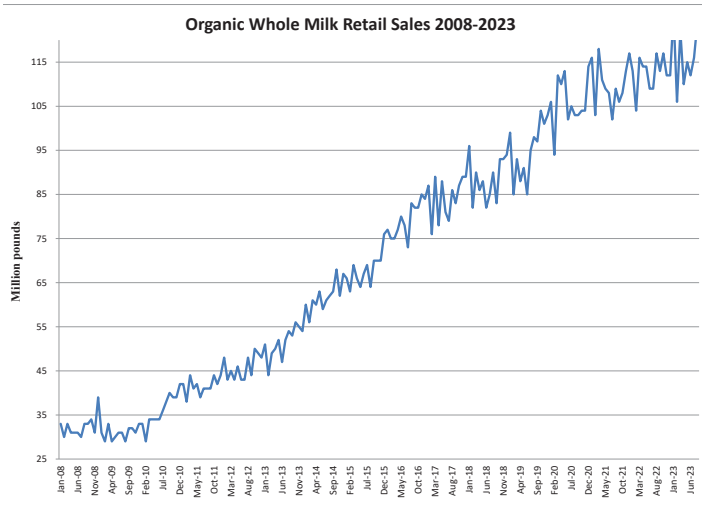

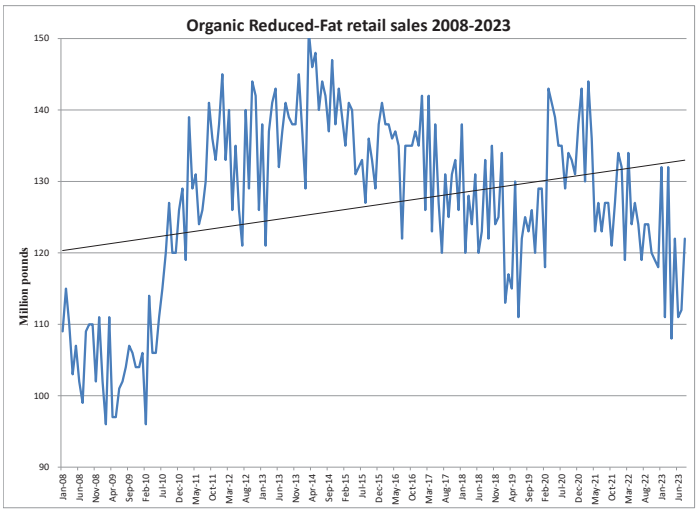

for eligible ODMAP applicants, the first payment was factored by 75 percent and if sufficient funding for ODMAP remains available at the conclusion of the application period, an additional payment of up to the remaining 25 percent may be made to each eligible applicant if USDA determines that additional assistance is still needed. New, transitioning, or expanding dairy operations

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Pay and Feed Prices

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requesting 2023 estimated milk production be used to determine their ODMAP payment are in the process of being approved by the Farm Service Agency (USDA FSA) National Office. For any new, transitioning, or expanded dairy operations that have received an approval letter after Wednesday, September 20, 2023, one payment will process for 100 percent of the enrolled ODMAP production. USDA FSA reports that slightly over 1,000 applications were received and 20 million of the $104 million has been distributed.

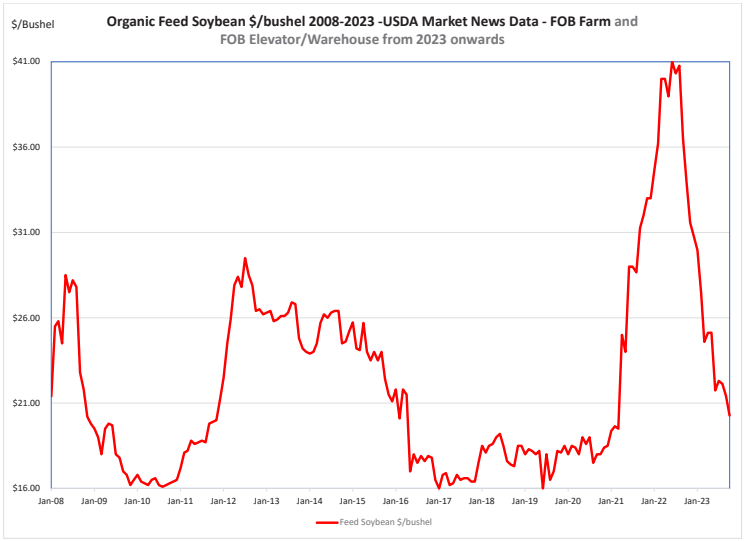
While the number of applications may seem low, there are factors that differentiate the use of federal funds by organic dairy farms from conventional dairies. The number of Anabaptist farms (Modern groups within the Anabaptist movement are the Amish, Mennonites, and Hutterites), can be estimated at approximately 45% of total organic dairies. The majority of these farms do not apply for federal support.

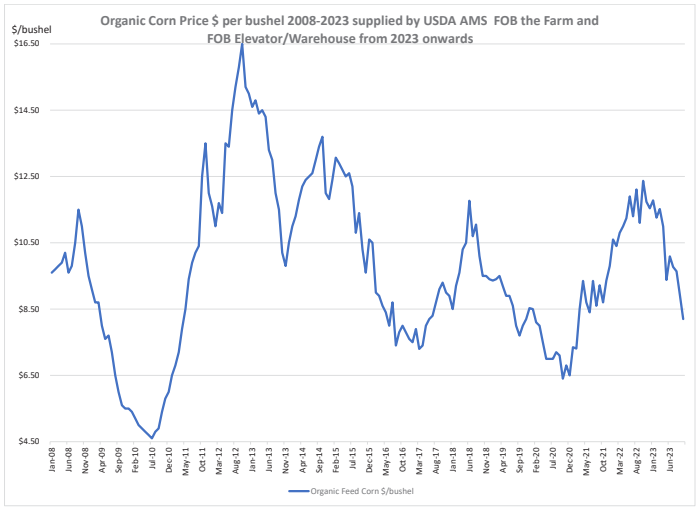
NODPA and other organic dairy advocates are asking USDA to make a second 100% payment to producers as on-farm conditions have not changed and organic dairies are still disappearing. The extra payment will still only use under half of the funds made available with the initial NFA. The NFA also stated that these funds are not subject to sequestration. While many organic dairies have benefited from DMC payments in 2023, estimates predict that these will disappear in the last months of the year, again leaving organic dairies struggling with cash flow entering the winter.

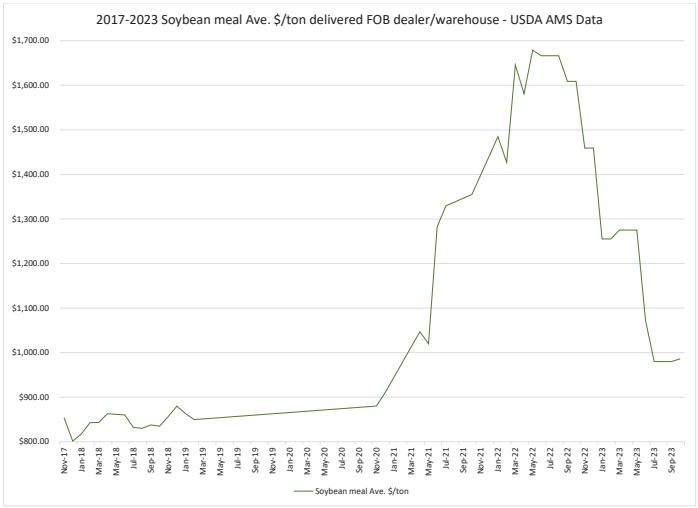
Feed

Organic feed corn delivered prices averaged $8.94/bu. in November 2023, down $2.24/bu. from 12 months prior. Organic feed soybean delivered prices averaged $20.25/bu. in November 2023, down $11.30/bu. from 12 months prior. Soybean meal is currently trading at 986/ton, about $473/cwt. lower than 2022.

A regional supplier of organic feed had good news in an email to their customers. They reported that with local harvest of organic corn and soybeans beginning, grain is coming in at significantly lower prices than last year, market prices have fallen this fall, especially with the protein grains, and there will be some "truly serious" price reductions starting on Monday October 30. They noted that roasted soybeans have dropped by over $300/T, soymeal by $60/T, peas by $90/T, sunflower meal by $200/T, and corn by $60/T. This reporting ties into national and international data that shows a reduction in delivered prices which is keeping domestic prices lower than last year. ◆

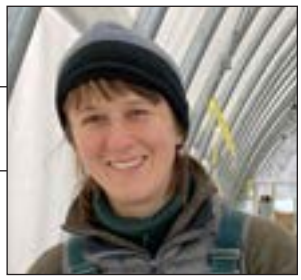






ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Ask the Vet



Watch Out for Severe Ketosis

Dayna Locitzer, DVM

Severe ketosis is one of those diseases that, if you haven't seen it very often, you might be confused at what you are seeing. Was my cow bitten by something rabid? Did it get some bad feed and now has circling disease? Why is my cow looking like she's going to attack me? She has a salt block but she is licking the walls like crazy… What's going on? Why is she walking funny? All of these are questions I have gotten before diagnosing a cow with severe ketosis. Cows with severe ketosis can act extremely neurologic. They are often licking surfaces, walking erratically, can show aggressive behaviors, and can even be down and thrashing around. While it is certainly important to consider diseases like rabies and listeria, severe ketosis is a less common manifestation of a very common dairy cow disease: ketosis. I wanted to bring this disease to your attention because I have seen it pop up on my calls to pasture-based dairies, all having similar predisposing factors and presentation: cows with a Body Condition Score >3.75 and had a long dry period.

But first, what is ketosis exactly? It is when an animal's energy requirements are not met by their energy intake, and they begin to utilize fat stores to make up for it. These fat stores metabolize into ketones, which are then used to make glucose (the metabolism's fuel). This glucose is used in a lactating cow's everyday bodily functions like milk production. A little bit of this process happens for all cows at calving. When this mismatch of energy ins and outs is very significant, large amounts of ketones end up circulating in the system and they are toxic to the animal's bloodstream. Cows are most at risk of ketosis during their first month of lactation because of the high demand for energy as they come into their milk and progress towards peak lactation. In mild cases of ketosis you might see a drop in milk production or they might be acting sluggish. You also might not see any outward clinical signs, but ketosis still has an effect on their body in the form of inhibiting their immune system and negatively affecting fertility. Mild cases can progress to severe cases where you will see a dramatic drop in milk production, decreased rumen function, and the neurologic signs I listed earlier. Cows that have had ketosis have an increased likelihood of developing a displaced abomasum, mastitis, metritis, and often end up on the cull list. Their early culling might not directly be because of ketosis, but many end up being poor doers because of it.

It is my observation that ketosis isn't as big of a problem on small organic pasture-based dairies as it is on conventional operations. I think this is because of a few reasons: 1) Though organic cows produce a lot of milk, they typically are not pressured to produce the high amounts that cows are asked to produce on larger conventional dairies. 2) They have access to digestible fibers via their high forage diet that keep their rumen full and functioning well, thereby supplying their metabolism with

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ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

The O DAIRY ACT – How It Was Made and a Summary of What It Mandates

By Ed Maltby, NODPA Executive Director

Speaking at the announcement of the bill at the Choiniere Family Farm, a grass-fed organic dairy in Highgate Center, Guy Choiniere, one of the farm's owners, is quoted as saying that with the cost of goods increasing, "The margins are much tighter for us, so this bill is super important."

In a recent article on July 22, 2022, Forbes magazine stated that "Data is Power." Similarly, withholding that data is creating an anti-competitive marketplace and depriving producers of their rights to information. Organic dairy brands are restricting what producers can share and discouraging Congress from supporting regional brands that would bring competition to the marketplace.

From the start of the USDA NOP program, there has been a scarcity of production and market information on organic products available from independent sources. The only data available was proprietary information that companies paid for. For conventional producers, the USDA has dedicated agencies to supply that information so that producers can make informed decisions on production and risk management. Organic data was so inaccessible in the first decade of the National Organic Program (NOP) that for one proposed regulation, NODPA was asked to provide production data. We had a similar request in 2023.

The Organic Production and Market Data Initiatives (ODI) was first authorized by Congress in the 2002 Farm Bill and then funded in the 2008 Farm Bill. The National Organic Coalition (NOC) and The Organic Trade Association (OTA) have been successfully advocating in Farm and Appropriation Bills in Congress for more funding for organic data from the USDA. Like anything in Congress, progress was slow but, in this case, effective. In keeping with NODPA's mission, we supported that progress and started to advocate for more data on organic milk.

In the last decade there has been language in the Farm Bill priorities presented to Congress by NOC about the need for more reliable and independent data on organic dairy volume, utilization, pay price and organic commodity feed pricing. The Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) has slowly built a database of sales of packaged fluid organic milk with monthly national reports. In the Northeast Dairy Task Force report in 2021, NODPA, NOC and Organic Farmers Association (OFA) supported various recommendations for increased organic data from USDA and funding for regional infrastructure. OFA also facilitated a committee of regional organic dairy groups during the Danone crisis which morphed into an Organic Dairy Committee that met weekly to advocate for national organic dairy priorities. This committee comprises the following groups: NODPA, Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA VT), Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York (NOFA-NY), Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), Western Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (WODPA), Straus Family Creamery, Andrew Olson (Board member for Westby Dairy), and Joesph Tomandl, III (ED of Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship), plus many individual organic dairy farmers and supporters from other organizations.

In early 2023, Maddie Kempner of NOFA-VT initiated a relationship with newly elected Vermont Senator Welch's office. They agreed to work with the OFA group to support the introduction of a 'marker' bill for the 2023-24 Farm Bill that instructs the USDA to supply more organic dairy data, more investment in regional dairy infrastructure, and a safety net program for organic dairies. Six months later, and many group discussions on weekly meetings that also included advocating for the Organic Dairy Marketing Program (ODMAP), there was a good draft ready for publication. CROPP Cooperative, which is an important gatekeeper for any organic legislation, had so far not wanted to take an active role in discussions. Senators Welch's and Baldwins' offices wanted the support of CROPP before proceeding since compromise is the dominant language in Congress. The OFA group decided to negotiate with CROPP on compromise wording in the Act in order to get it introduced into the Senate.

On 10/19/2023 the Organic Dairy Assistance, Investment, and Reporting Yields Act of 2023 (ODAIRY) S.3097, was read twice in the Senate and referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. The Act is sponsored by senators Welch, Gillibrand, Sanders and Booker.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Title: To require the Secretary of Agriculture to provide support for organic dairy producers and processors, and for other purposes. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Organic Dairy Assistance, Investment, and Reporting Yields Act of 2023" or the "O DAIRY Act of 2023".

The O DAIRY ACT will:

Improve data collection and reporting for organic dairy including:

- Cost of production data for organic milk (including all costs, not just organic feed).
- Organic All Milk Price Survey, analogous to the existing National Agriculture Statistic Service (NASS) All Milk Price Survey, to gather and report monthly data about what organic farmers are being paid for their milk, nationally and in regions with the largest organic dairy production.
- Organic cost-of-production data by state and regional data relating to the quantity of organic milk production; organic mailbox price; and major organic feedstuff prices.

Require USDA to propose a safety net program for organic dairy farms based on organic-specific milk and input cost data that prioritizes small farms.

Provide investment in organic milk processing infrastructure to enhance regional milkshed markets that seek to drive a greater affinity for regionally sourced and processed organic dairy products by incentivizing support for:

- The development of new organic dairy processing plants that support multiple regional small dairy operations.
- Initiatives that establish institutional purchasing of local organic dairy products.
- Investment in infrastructure to gain transport and processing efficiencies.
- The establishment of on-farm organic dairy processing and storage.
- Producers and processors that want to expand regional organic processing infrastructure serving small dairy operations.
- Initiatives that support increasing regional processing capacity.
- New Regional Organic Dairy Market Specialist positions in each major organic dairy producing region to conduct research on the marketing of organic dairy.

Provide immediate support to address dramatically increased organic input costs for organic dairy farms by extending Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP) to cover certain losses related to higher-than-normal organic feed or other input costs that result in a net income decrease of more than 10% in a given year. Requires the USDA to streamline the payment process under this program.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

USDA AMS ORGANIC RESEARCH PROJECT

This survey is reprinted by NODPA with the permission of the USDA in order to allow participation by those producers/organizations that are not connected to the internet. To fill out the form online please go to: https://cfigroupfed.gov1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5uS0VaUxZCxWasm . The survey has been developed to obtain feedback directly from members of the organic industry, and the closely related public, regarding what organic data is currently needed and where future resources should be focused to provide additional value.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

DEMOGRAPHICS

Q1. What is your job title?

Q2. What commodity group is your primary focus?

a. Dairy
b. Cotton
c. Livestock/Poultry/Grain
d. Specialty Crops

Q3. How many years have you been active in the Organic Dairy industry?

Q4. What regions of the United States do you or your organization serve? Select as many as applicable.

a. East
b. Midwest/Central
c. West

Q5. What role do you or your organization play in the Organic Dairy industry? Select as many as applicable.

a. Grower/Farmer/Producer
b. Processor
c. Broker/Trader
d. Distributor
e. End-user
f. Other:

Q6. For what end use do you or your organization produce organic products?

AMS SPECIFIC

Q7. Are you aware of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Market News?

a. Yes
b. No

Q8. Are you aware of the Organic Dairy-related reports published bi-weekly by AMS Market News? (https://www.ams.usda.gov/market-news/dairy-organic-market-news)

a. Yes
b. No

Q9. How often do you view the Organic Dairy reports published by the AMS Market News? If you answered "yes" to question 8.

a. Daily
b. Weekly
c. Monthly
d. Quarterly
e. Yearly

INFORMATION QUESTIONS

Q10. When you or your organization need information specifically regarding pricing & volume, what sources do you use?

a. Paid subscription to private third parties
b. Government sources (like the USDA)
c. Combination of private and government sources
d. Other: _____

Q11. Would you prefer to receive this information from:

a. Paid subscription to private third parties
b. Government sources (like the USDA)
c. Combination of private and government sources
d. Other: _____

Q12. When receiving reports regarding pricing and volume, what is your highest priority?

a. Accuracy of information
b. Frequency of information
c. Diversity of information
d. All the above

Q13. Which focus would best fit the Organic Dairy industry, in your opinion?

a. A broad picture of price data for all organic commodities
b. In-depth data about a few major organic commodities based on sales
c. Other: _____

Q14. How could visualizations best show important information about organic prices?

a. Focus on current prices for specific/selected commodities
b. Highlight the difference between organic and conventional pricing
c. Compare/contrast data over time
d. Other: _____

Q15. What frequency of data is most useful to you and your organization?

a. Daily/weekly up-to-date current prices and volumes
b. Monthly or quarterly aggregated information
c. Annual averages to compare with data from past years
d. Other: _____

Survey - continued on page 20

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

USDA AMS Organic Research Project Survey – *continued from page 19*

Q16. If applicable, what is the approximate cost to you annually to access organic pricing and volume data?

Q17. What concerns, if any, do you have with providing data and information about your organic operations to AMS Dairy Market News professionals?

Q18. How would you envision using AMS Dairy Market News information if it were available? (Select all that apply)

a. Analyze markets.
b. Establish product pricing (e.g., for markets/sale to consumers)
c. Determine commodity values for business purposes (e.g., assess loan values, settle insurance claims, settle contract payments, compute final prices under formula pricing arrangements)
d. Assist in analysis and decision-making for policy.
e. Develop marketing strategy.
f. Gain or maintain general market awareness.
g. Plan for production intentions
h. Assist in gauging the effectiveness of marketing or promotional campaigns.
i. Other: _____

Q19. How would you prefer to receive or access AMS Organic Dairy Market News information? (Select all that apply)

a. E-mail subscription
b. AMS My Market News/Market News Portal/website
c. Text
d. Social media, such as Twitter or Facebook
e. Mass Media – including radio, television and periodicals
f. App for a mobile device, such as smartphone or iPad
g. Website other than USDA
h. API (application programming interface)
d. Other (please specify) _____

Thank you for your time.

Please Fax your completed survey to 866-554-9483 or mail directly to:

CFI Group

3916 Ranchero Dr

Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Q20. How can the AMS support/prepare the organic dairy industry for the future?

FEATURED FARM

ACKERMANN DAIRY FARM
HARDWICK, VT

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of dairy farming, with - according the University of Vermont press release - an "outstanding herd, quality milk production, enviable pastures and commitment to dairying."

Welcome to Ackermann Dairy!

Organic dairy farmers Jimmy and Sara Ackermann explain their success via their philosophy of dairy farming: "Our animals come first. Everything we do, we do for them. Everything we have, we have because of them. It's a full circle lifestyle."

The Ackermann's, who have two young daughters - Allie and Andee - purchased their 100-acre Hardwick, Vermont farm in 2014. The farm has 50 tillable acres, 50 acres in pasture and they rent another 200 acres for making hay. They have a 120-head herd of Holsteins, with a 60-65 head milking. The couple both work the farm, and rely only on two teenaged sisters who work for them as needed, as well as another couple who pitches in on weekends. Their own daughters, of course, help out with age-appropriate chores, too.

Jimmy and Sara work together like clock work, haying each year.

Both Sara and Jimmy grew up on conventional family dairy farms. In 2007, Jimmy began a dairy in a joint venture with his brother Ian, in Cabot, Vermont. That farm was located on Jimmy's grandmother's dairy farm property, whose fields had been rented out to an organic dairy farmer who was now ready to stop dairying. They purchased his herd of certified organic dairy cows and farmed on the family land, shipping milk to Horizon.

In 2007, when the organic milk price was high, it provided an opportunity to enter dairy farming without the ups and downs of a constantly changing milk price. It offered an opportunity to make a living dairy farming, Jimmy said.

In 2011, Sara officially joined the dairy operation as an equal partner after losing her job in the corporate world. She had received her bachelor's degree in business management, and thought she was destined to live in the corporate world. But she was wrong. Sara's father's advice was to "do what makes you happy - you don't need the high paying, fancy job to be happy. If farming makes you happy, that's what you should do." So that is exactly what she did.

When Ian left dairy farming for other pursuits, Jimmy and Sara opted to continue with their own family dairy farm, ultimately purchasing preserved farmland from a nearby dairy farmer in 2014. The land was not certified organic, so they had to make some concessions while undergoing the three-year transition, and maintaining their organic certification for the herd.

"In 2007 when we started farming, everything was turn-key ready for organic production – cows & land," Jimmy said. "When we purchased our farm in Hardwick, we needed to transition all of the hayland into organic."

In order to continue shipping organic milk to Horizon Organic, the couple utilized the fields closest to the barn for pasture, because those had not received commercial fertilizer and were fully certifiable. They took hay from the rest of the land, selling it conventionally for three years until it was fully transitioned and certified via NOFA-VT. In the meantime, they continued to crop the land from the Cabot farm, trucking

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FEATURED FARM

Allie helps with milking.

ACKERMANN DAIRY FARM
HARDWICK, VT

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it the seven miles to feed their certified organic herd. It was a very costly process because it required three dump trucks to haul the feed and get the crops harvested in a timely manner.

Since 2022, the Ackermann's have been shipping to Stonyfield Organic, after Horizon terminated their contract as it exited the Northeast dairy market. While they don't think the organic dairy farming will ever be what it was in 2014, when they moved to Hardwick, they "do feel very confident that if we are going to make it in the organic dairy farming world, we are absolutely with the right company with Stonyfield," Sara said. "Being a producer for Stonyfield has put the fun back into farming. We have hope again. We are able to dream about the future and feel confident that there will be a future. Stonyfield cares."

Herd Dynamics

Ackermann Dairy's cows produce 70 pounds of milk each on average, year-round, and their rolling herd average is 22, 600 pounds. The average butterfat percentage is 4.1, protein is 3.1, and other solids are 5.7. The somatic cell count averages 75,000. Those numbers reflect the care and commitment given to the cows, and their aim at continually improving cow comfort and care.

The cows are on pasture from mid-May to mid-September, typically overnight when flies are not as active and temperatures are cooler. They are rotated every day, and between the pasture grazing and the silage in the total mixed ration, which consists of grass silage and grains, the cows average 35 - 45 percent DMI from grass. The TMR is fed year-round.

"Mike Thresher, of Morrison's Custom Feeds, has been there every step of the way and goes up and beyond for us." Jim said.

Cow pastures are primarily hay fields, which are fenced off for grazing as needed. Manure is spread onto these fields in the spring and the fall to promote optimal nutrition for the pasture forages. Heifer pastures are rougher terrain, and manure is not able to be spread on those fields. They don't reseed any land used for pasture, and they manage the land carefully through rotation to prevent overgrazing.

Water is piped, via a one inch pipeline, to every paddock. One hundred gallon water tubs, with a float and a water valve to control the flow, are used. The furthest water tub is one-quarter mile from the barn.

"Having water access easily available in every paddock is an absolute must. An old farmer once told us, 'water is your cheapest grain.'" Sara said.

Aside from pasture and hay, the Ackermann's have tried to grow organic corn to chop for silage. However, they realized that one year rotations were needed to prevent issues such as weed pressure, as they could not utilize herbicides or pesticides, and that it is just too intensive, requiring reseeding to grass after each corn harvest. They do not grow any crops except hay on their tillable acres.

When not on pasture, the milking herd is housed in a 73 stall tie stall barn, and they are milked here as well. Cows have outdoor access for about one hour per day during the non-grazing season. During this exercise time in the barnyard,, they can be readily checked for heat and monitored for health issues, too.

FEATURED FARM

The manure from the cow barn is removed from the barn with a gutter cleaner system, which dumps into a hopper and then into a four foot pipe, to be delivered to the liquid manure pit.

Soon the milking herd will adjust to an new system, as a plan to add robotic milkers, and increase the herd size to 80, is being implemented. The decision to go robotic was made to decrease the labor needs on the dairy, and to provide the cows with some more freedom. This will also keep the farm modern, and perhaps help to entice one of their daughters to take over the dairy in the future.

"We are very interested in installing two Lely robotic milkers. We feel that with the way of the world, and as hard as it is to find help these days, we really need something more reliable," Sara said. "We have always felt that Lely is the lead manufacturer of robotic milkers. We plan to install them in a newly built free stall facility that will begin construction in the spring of 2024. We look forward to having the cows live a more free life, moving around and being milked on their schedule, not ours."

Heifers above six months to 15 months of age are grazed from mid-May through the end of October, and often follow the milking herd. They aren't as picky, and clean-up the pastures nicely, so the less desirable forages aren't left uneaten. The heifers are moved based on both the quality of the feed they are consuming, as well as the land conditions, and are brought back to the barn daily for monitoring and feeding. These heifers are housed together in a bedded pack barn, and then moved to a freestall heifer facility after they age out of this group.

Allie and Jimmy team up to accomplish chores.

The bedded pack has fresh sawdust added each day, after the manure is removed. The scrape alley is cleaned three times per week.

"We choose bedded pack for heifers because it allows them to get more exercise. It gives them more room to run and has traction to run and buck," Sara said. "For our new cow barn and heifer facility we plan to have a combination of free stall and bedded pack. For the younger groups of heifers, we will still have the bedded pack."

The new barn will have free stalls for the cows, as well as the older heifers, offering them a chance to acclimate to lying down in the stalls.

Calves are reared in new - as of 2020 - individual pens, housed in the same barn as the milking cows, until they are weaned from waste milk at two months. Previous individual pens were wooden sided, making them difficult to disinfect. The new pens are made with plastic dividers, and easily sanitized, and calf health has improved as a result.

"Since putting in our new calf pens, our calf health has improved. We are able to fully wash and sanitize every pen before another calf gets put in so

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FEATURED FARM

ACKERMANN DAIRY FARM
HARDWICK, VT

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Allie and Andee Ackermann with one of their dairy's calves.

they are starting with a fresh start," Sara said. "We let the calves out to run around the barn every couple days while we clean their pen out and put new dry shavings back in the pen.

Calves are bottle fed waste milk twice per day. Newborn calves are fed all the colostrum they can drink, and water is introduced at day three. At two weeks old, a calf starter grain and hay are added. Once weaned, they are moved into group pens with three or four similarly aged animals, and are fed a heifer ration.

The air quality in the current barn is not ideal, and separating the calf pens to better enable air quality improvement is a future plan. All heifer calves are vaccinated at birth with Calf-Guard® for scours and also receive Inforce 3 for respiratory viruses. They use Calf 180 ®- made by Crystal Creek - when calves are showing signs of stress or illness.

"Raising healthy calves can be very difficult but it is also incredibly important," Jimmy said. "Calves are the foundation of your herd. They are your future."

The couple raises all of their own replacement heifers. The herd was closed up until 2022, when - after some spring breeding difficulties - they opted to purchase 10 first and second lactation cows. They currently don't sell heifers, as they have use for all of them. The cost of heifer raising today is not reflected in the current sales price, Jimmy said, while in the past, the sale of some of their organic heifers offered an additional income stream.

Breeding has been one area where they've focused their energy, and successfully have made positive changes to the herd. Sara has been the sole breeder since 2021, after taking classes in 2019.This change allowed more flexibility with breeding time, as Sara is on the farm all the time. When using a private breeder, there was no choice as to when to breed, as it depending solely on when the breeder came to the farm.

"When we first started we had what we called a start-up herd. There were so many things that needed to be improved with genetics. It took us many years to finally see the effects of that breeding." Jimmy said. "The first thing we started with was improving feet and legs. Once we felt satisfied with feet and legs, we moved onto production."

Calving ease bull genetics is utilized for all first calf heifers and small-framed cows. Sexed semen is used if they are getting too many bull calves, and also to insure that the genetics they've worked so hard to breed into the herd are sustained. Next up are genetics geared towards their goal of robotic milking. The primary traits for successful robotic milking are teat placement and spacing, Sara said.

Health and Welfare

"Being organic is all about preventative maintenance. Once a cow gets sick, we are much more limited to what we can use to help them get better," Jimmy said. "If you are an organic farmer and you are not implementing preventative measures, you are going to come up short. The only way to beat many illnesses organically is to not get them in the first place. Some things are unavoidable – and we have had our fair share of them over the years – but we have learned that there is nothing more important than preventative maintenance. Once you have something, it is very hard to treat organically."

FEATURED FARM

Keeping organic cows healthy has been the secret to their success. They do chose to utilize vaccinations for the entire herd, twice per year, using Cattlemaster Gold FP5® which protects against many different diseases and is safe for pregnant animals as a part of a preventative maintenance plan. And they have other routine preventative measures in place.

"We use Dynamint® heavily on our farm for high SCC cows, mastitis, or edema from calving," Sara said. "We have a protocol that all second lactation cows and older get a calcium bolus after calving to help prevent milk fever. If she still goes down with milk fever, we then use calcium given by IV. We use Muse for reproductive issues. We use aspirin & Banamine for pain as needed."

Over the years, their experience has shown them that there isn't too much veterinarians can do organically to save very sick cows. They previously would spend a lot of money treating sick cows, only to lose them anyway without the use of conventional antibiotics. Phone consults with veterinarians willing to help them sort out issues and troubleshoot are utilized now. But they are willing to let a cow go if their tried and true organic remedies don't work.

"Over the years we have gotten much better at diagnosing and treating our own animals," Sara said. "We primarily use our vet for herd checks and medications that need prescriptions. It is hard to lose cows when you know you could save her conventionally but overall, we appreciate the medication limitations for organic farmers."

Infrastructure improvements can also have a big impact on cow welfare. The robotic milking system and new housing plans are part of the ongoing improvements to cow comfort. The Ackermann's are also working on building a sawdust storage shed, large enough to store an entire winters' worth of sawdust. Without this storage, they have had difficulty finding quality sawdust as it was needed.

"With being organic and not being able to use the same variety of medicine that other farmers can, clean, bacteria-free sawdust is an absolute must for us. If the sawdust has moisture in it, the cows are more likely to get mastitis. If one gets mastitis, depending on the severity of it, we may end up losing her," Sara said.

The Ackermann's have relied on "live and learn," as well as the experiences shared by other organic dairy farmers, to help build and grow their award-winning organic dairy over the past decades.

"Most of the things we have implemented have had a positive impact on our farm," Jimmy said. "The biggest game changers have been our manure pit – to alleviate every day manure hauling; a stationary mixer, which eliminated the use of another tractor; new cow stations which include longer neck chains and higher tie rail to provide more cow comfort; and outdoor steel grain bins that are run with an auger. The grain bins have saved us on wasted grain and also help deliver the grain to where it needs to go with ease."

Their biggest concern with the organic dairy industry today is the lack of consistent protocols for organic certifiers, which has contributed to the proliferation of excessively large certified organic dairies.

"There is no way that an organic dairy can efficiently graze 1000 or more cows," Sara said.

The Ackermann's have purposefully designed their dairy farm to be sustainable for the land, the cows and the community now and into the future. It's a way of life. It's a living. Organic dairy farming is - as they said - "a full circle lifestyle." ◆

The Ackermann's can be reached at: Ackermann Dairy Farm, 369 Brown Farm Rd., Hardwick, VT 05843, 802-793-0274, ackermanndairy@gmail.com

The Ackermanns believe dairy farming is "a full circle lifestyle".

ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Managing Soil Fertility and Other Lessons Learned on Grass-fed Dairies

By Sara Ziegler, Heather Darby, and Sarah Flack

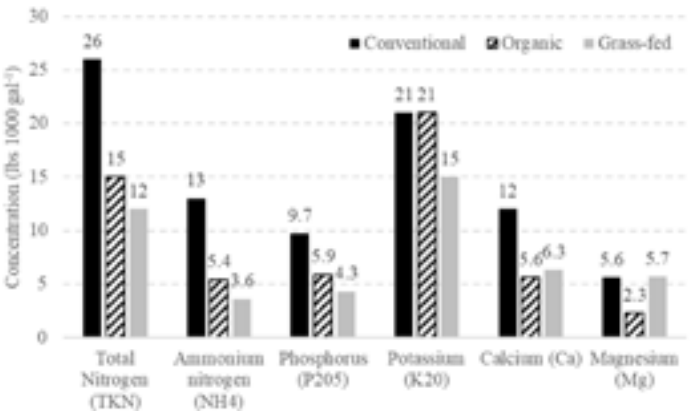
Grass-fed dairy continues to experience sustained market growth. While this presents opportunities for producers, it can also bring some significant challenges and require shifts in management to be successful. Through a project funded through the USDA Organic Research and Education Initiative Grant (Project no. 2018-02802), Dr. Heather Darby and her team investigated a diversity of grass-fed approaches and strategies that ultimately led to a wide range of productivity and financial viability While each farm is unique in its own ways, several trends have begun to emerge.

Photo by Sean Foster on Unsplash

Amongst numerous grass-fed farms, there were significant challenges in maintaining adequate soil fertility especially when the land base had to expand. Since no grain can be fed, nearly 100% of the diet must come from forages. For an all-forage diet to provide sufficient nutrition to the herd, the soil must be able to provide adequate nutrition to feed the forages. Likewise, the number of acres of land needed to produce sufficient forage quantity will also increase substantially. The average grass-fed dairy manages 5.66 acres per mature cow but ranges from 1.71 to 10.3. In general, farms with larger land bases tend to have higher costs of production, especially regarding expenses related to stored forage production (https://go.uvm.edu/xkovr). Maintaining yields and quality on an expanded land base needs to be recognized as an investment and cost to transitioning to grass-fed dairy. To minimize the number of acres required, farmers should prioritize maximizing yields and digestible fiber per acre.

Generally, most organic farms utilize manure as the major source of fertility for their crops. Some farms also import additional nutrients commonly in the forms of poultry manure, lime, and wood ash (https://go.uvm.edu/fzy04). If transitioning to grass-fed production, it is likely that the quantity and quality of manure produced on the farm will change. Manure production is directly related to milk production and dry matter intake. A farm that once produced 60 pounds of milk per animal per day feeding grain may decline to 30 pounds per animal per day when grass-fed and thus will produce 26 pounds less manure per animal per day.

In addition, nutrient concentrations in manure will change. The less grain fed, the lower the nutrient concentration of the manure. As seen in the figure below, dairy animals that are fed conventional diets, which often include higher levels of grain, generally have higher nutrient concentrations in their manure. As farms transition to organic, less grain is generally fed to animals due to cost, grazing requirements, and changing milk production goals. In grass-fed systems, with no grain at all, nutrient concentrations in manure can drop by 50%. Although grain is a costly input, it helps provide valuable dry matter, nutrients, energy, and protein to cows, supplementing the forage available on the farm. But perhaps



ORGANIC PRODUCTION

less appreciated are the nutrients not utilized by the animal that make their way into the manure and back on to the fields, adding fertility to support forage production. In this way, grain is both a nutritional supplement and a fertilizer.

Grass-fed farms have their work cut out for them. They typically manage more land, produce less manure, produce less nutrient-dense manure, and have access to fewer and more costly purchased fertility sources. However, they also produce, and therefore ship, less milk off the farm. With lower milk production, are these systems able to maintain productivity without nutrients being imported? To help understand nutrient flows on these farms, the concept of Whole Farm Nutrient Balancing can be applied. Whole Farm Nutrient Balancing is essentially like balancing a checkbook of nutrients coming onto and leaving the farm. Farms import (or deposit) nutrients through purchased feed, bedding, fertilizers and other soil amendments, minerals, and imported manures. Farms export (withdraw) nutrients from the farm through the sale of animals, milk/meat, crops, and other products. Issues can arise when there is a severe imbalance between imports and exports, especially over long periods of time. If more nutrients come on to the farm than leave, nutrient levels in soils will continue to rise and ultimately may pose risks to the environment. On the other hand, if more nutrients leave the farm than are imported, soil fertility will decline and ultimately crop, and animal productivity will suffer.

Let's dig into this a bit more with three examples evaluating the whole farm nutrient balance: first of an organic farm, second of a grass-fed farm with purchased fertility, and third of a grass-fed farm with no purchased fertility. In the first example, an organic dairy is feeding grain and buying forage. The farm manages 48 cows with 20 replacements on 105 acres. Exports from this farm are primarily from milk but also some from cull cows and compost sales. As seen in the following table, the farm is operating in a slight nutrient excess, with nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K) accumulating each year.

Organic Farm Whole Farm Nutrient Balance	N	P	K
Imported (tons) Grain, Baleage, Bedding, Minerals	5.64	1.00	3.57
Exported (tons) Milk, Meat, Compost	2.66	0.45	0.71
Balance (tons)	2.98	0.55	2.86
lbs./hundredweight (CWT)	0.87	0.16	0.84
lbs./acre	56.8	10.5	54.5

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Managing Soil Fertility

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Let's compare to a grass-fed dairy with 48 cows, 40 replacements, and 240 acres. Since there are no grain imports, fertility is brought on to the farm in the form of poultry manure. As shown in this example, the quantity of imported nutrients is low and nearly all from the poultry manure. The level of exported nutrients exceeds the nutrients coming on to the farm.

Grass-fed Farm Whole Farm Nutrient Balance	N	P	K
Imported (tons) Poultry Manure, Minerals	0.08	2.06	0.80
Exported (tons) Milk, Cull Cows	1.83	0.34	0.53
Balance (tons)	-1.03	1.72	0.27
lbs./hundredweight (CWT)	-0.32	0.53	0.08
lbs./acre	-8.62	14.3	2.27

Finally, if the same grass-fed farm does not import the poultry manure, all nutrients are at a deficit. When evaluating whole farm nutrient balances, these types of imbalances can be helpful at times (for example, to draw down high soil P), but long-term draw down of nutrients is harmful to production. Evaluation of whole farm nutrient balances is critical to monitor and balance nutrient flows on the farm.

Grass-fed Farm Whole Farm Nutrient Balance	N	P	K
Imported (tons) Poultry Manure, Minerals	0.08	2.06	0.80
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lbs./acre	-8.62	14.3	2.27

How to avoid these pitfalls? Farmers should start by evaluating the soil nutrient levels through conducting basic soil samples and calculating the whole farm nutrient balance to develop a baseline. The "Whole Farm Nutrient Mass Balance Calculator" developed by Cornell University is an easy-to-use tool intended to help identify opportunities for improvements on dairy farms. Farmers should monitor yields and fertilize (starting with manure) to achieve realistic yield and quality goals. Fertility needs of forages can be quite substantial, depending on the desired yield. In stands that consist primarily of grass, every ton of dry matter will require 50 lbs. of N, 17 lbs. of P, and 50 lbs. of K. And the more dry matter harvested per acre, the higher the nutrient needs of the crop.

While manure is a complete fertilizer containing all 13 essential nutrients for plants, a grass-fed dairy is unlikely to produce sufficient manure to adequately cover all their acres. Accessing manure from other farms might be a cost-effective option to maintain P, K, and other nutrients. To meet N demands of grasses, legumes should be incorporated into the cropping system. Maintaining mixed stands can produce higher yields of forage and replace the need for supplemental N additions. Practices such as frost seeding or using a no-till drill to add seed on a regular basis can help maintain legume levels. In addition, addressing compaction, increasing soil biological activity, and improving overall soil health will help support these efforts. Although there are many factors and practices that influence forage quality and quantity, soil fertility and health are primary drivers that will require monitoring and investment to be successful with grass-fed dairy.

Through numerous grass-fed research projects, our team has recently published Farmer's Guide to Grass-fed Dairy Production! Collectively written by agronomists, animal nutritionists, grazing experts and other practitioners, this guide provides over 50 pages of practical information on

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managing a grass-fed dairy herd and represents the latest research-based information to date. You can find a copy online at https://www.uvm.edu/extension/nwcrops/grass-fed-dairy or request a paper copy by contacting Sara Ziegler at sara.ziegler@uvm.edu or 802-309-3472.

While we've learned a lot over the last 5 years through our own research and working alongside our wonderful farmer partners, there are still many questions left unanswered and there is much work to be done to support the grass-fed dairy industry going forward. To aid in that endeavor, I'm pleased to announce that our project team has received another multi-year USDA OREI funded research project, titled Enhancing the Viability of Grass-Fed Dairy Production in the U.S. Through Comprehensive Research and Extension (Project no. 2023-51300). The project team includes a range of expertise from University of Vermont, University of New Hampshire, and the USDA.

University of Vermont

Dr. Heather Darby, Agronomist and Soil Specialist

Roy Desrochers, Sensory Scientist

Sarah Flack, Grazing Livestock Specialist,
Sarah Flack Consulting

Dr. Jana Kraft, Associate Professor of Animal and Veterinary Science

Dr. Bryony Sands, Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Dr. Qingbin Wang, Professor of Community Development and Applied Economics

Sara Ziegler, Forage and Pasture Research Specialist

University of New Hampshire

Dr. André F. Brito, Associate Professor Organic Dairy

Dr. Peter Erickson, Professor of Dairy Cattle Nutrition and Management

USDA-ARS Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Research Unit

Dr. Kathy Soder, Animal Scientist

Dr. Carrie Laboski, Soil Scientist

In partnership with farmers and industry the project will investigate:

- Best strategies for youngstock management and development,
- Grass-fed farm economics and cost of production,
- Research that evaluates soil fertility options and nutrient cycling on grass-fed farms,
- Research on high energy forages and utilization in grass-fed dairy rations,
- Research on sensory and nutritional quality of grass-fed milk, and
- Expanded educational and networking opportunities for farmers, processors and technical service providers.

This project will begin with a survey of all grass-fed dairies in the U.S, with a primary focus on youngstock management. If you are a grass-fed dairy producer, keep an eye out for the survey early in 2024! ◆

For more information about this project or how to participate, contact Sara Ziegler at sara.ziegler@uvm.edu or 802-309-3472; Sarah Flack at sarahflackconsulting@gmail.com or 802-309-3714; Heather Darby at heather.darby@uvm.edu or 802-656-7610.

ORGANIC INDUSTRY NEWS

Whole Herd Health: Holistic Healing Therapies That Work

A NODPA Field Days Workshop with Dr. Cynthia Lankenau, DVM

By Liz Bawden, NODPA Contributing Writer and past NODPA Board President

In my humble opinion, Dr. Cynthia Lankenau ranks as one of the "rock stars" of the holistic veterinary world. So, we were fortunate to welcome her back to the Annual NODPA Field Days in Reedsville, PA this September.

"Whole Herd Health" is a pretty massive topic, and she uses a variety of healing modalities in her practice: botanicals, acupuncture, chiropractic, homeopathy, traditional Chinese medicine and reiki. Her founding mantra seemed to be "Do what works". A one-hour workshop could not possibly make the attending farmers competent practitioners of any of these modalities, so Dr. Lankenau pointed out some basic treatments for common health problems.

The most stressful time for a cow is at calving, and there are some acupuncture points that you can get familiar with to offer help when it's needed. Acupuncture manipulates the electrical energy flowing in distinct pathways to causes changes in the body. Farmers are not trained to use needles, but can achieve very real effects using brushes, liniments, finger pressure or even tuning forks at these points on energy meridians. If you suspect a malposition before she begins labor, massage with your fingers or use a liniment on her hind foot above the outside dew claw, along the coronary band. This is called BL-67 or the "Spinning Babies" point; it will help encourage the calf to right itself into the correct birthing position. It is only effective before labor actually begins. If the calf is descended into the birth canal, use LI-1 which is found on the inside of the inside claw on her front foot at the coronary band. To increase dilation a bit when the calf seems large, use the "Good Shepherd" point at ST-45 located at the top part of the inside claw on her rear foot.

Homeopathy uses (mostly) botanicals in very dilute doses to achieve healing of an ailment that an excess of the same ingredient would cause. Choosing a remedy will be determined by the actual symptoms, what makes symptoms better or worse, the body type or constitution of the animal and more. Here's Dr Lackenau's list of emergency remedies to have on hand for acute conditions:

Arnica – for any soft tissue trauma

Bellis – for pelvic trauma

Hypericum – for nerve pain, a pinched nerve after calving or a recently dehorned calf

Belladonna – hot, red inflammation

Aconite- for acute "wind invasion", pneumonia due to drafts, sudden fear

Silica, Sulphur, Carbo veg – mixture for mastitis

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Nosodes – homeopathic "vaccines", deliver in drinking water

To strengthen a cow for her overall wellness, homeopathy pays attention to an animal's "constitution". There are four main constitutional types that are associated with these remedies:

Cal Carb: These are big, blocky, slow-moving, stubborn.

Cal Phos – These are thinner, a bit nervous.

Phos – thinner still, and a bit excitable

Lycopodium – very nervous, easily startled, often digestive/liver issues.

She highlighted the following remedies for these special circumstances:

Gelsemium – for muscular exhaustion at calving

Arnica – use after calving to reduce injury/inflammation, for any putrid/septic type of uterine infection, bruises, can't handle being touched.

Bellis – down cows, helps with trauma to organs, sensitive to the cold.

Photo by Sean Foster on Unsplash

Traditional Chinese medicine uses plants and combinations of plants to cure disease. It is imperative to locate these from reputable importers since Chinese medicines have a very high rate of contamination. This system of medicine recognizes that disease happens in layers; so, a practitioner has to diagnose not only the disease, but also the layer it has penetrated.

One essential remedy Dr. Lankenau recommended is Yunnan Baiyao, a strong antiseptic that stops bleeding and it's very useful diluted in water and infused for a septic uterus. For first beginning colds, use Yin Qiao (Elderberry); if it's a bit deeper, use Gan Mao Ling (a mixture of 6 herbs). She shared a case study of a newborn calf that turned septic: he was born in a manure-filled gutter in a cold, damp barn and was there for several hours before being assisted. Although he was moved to a box stall with his dam, he became quite ill, experiencing the onset of respiratory symptoms and diarrhea. He received Gan Mao Ling for the respiratory symptoms, and a remedy called "Early Comfort" for the scours. Both remedies are in tincture form, and the calf received 60 drops of each four times a day for 5 days. The dose was dropped to twice a day, then discontinued. By the 6th day, the calf was well.

Western herbal medicine is a bit more familiar; she recommended sourcing herbs from organic and sustainably harvested sources. Use ground herbs on adult animals where they are well-absorbed and utilized but use tinctures on young calves. A general rule of thumb is to give a cow 3 to 4 times the human dose; give a calf the human dose. A hypothermic week-old calf with watery diarrhea was treated by mixing tinctures of

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Whole Herd Health: Holistic Healing Therapies That Work

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Cinnamon, Agrimony, Echinacea root, White Horehound, and Usnea lichen. He received equal parts of the herbal tinctures mixed together; one teaspoon three to four times a day, given orally for 10 days. With good nutrition and a warm, dry pen the calf fully recovered.

Down cows are especially complicated due to what is called Compartmental Syndrome; this is where the thick fascia covering the muscles stays tight, stagnant blood causes the muscles to swell, and leads to death of the muscle tissue. Corydalis will help to move the stagnant blood to keep the muscles from dying. Vigorous massage will help as well, especially along the sciatic nerve, along the quadriceps, at the top of the hamstring muscles and at the "Jing River" point – just above the hock.

For ketotic cows, use citrus peel, Burdock root, and Milk Thistle seed (freshly ground) at a dose of 4 tablespoons twice a day to support the liver, spleen, and pancreas.

She reminded us that conventional veterinary medicine relies on antibiotics to control disease organisms, but the reason that they may not work for long is that the antibiotic uses only one pathway to control disease whereas herbal remedies have many phytochemicals, and therefore have a multi-pronged approach. This is why the major pharmaceutical companies have not moved to patent drugs from botanical sources; for when they isolate a compound that is identified as effective, it may not work as well (or at all) by itself.

She recommended the following sources for herbs: Frontier Co-op, Mountain Rose Herbs, Zach Woods Herb Farm, Healing Spirits Herb Farm, and Pacific Botanicals. And Chinese medicines should be sourced through a professional to ensure quality. ◆

Dr. Cynthia Lankenau, DVM, can be reached at the Holistic Center for Veterinary Care, 9002 Sunset Dr, Colden, NY 14033, (716) 941-9477.

NET UPDATE

Recent ODairy Discussions

By Liz Bawden, Organic Dairy Farmer

A mid-lactation cow with a calf at side is milked twice a day, and recently exhibiting watery milk. CMT was negative, but she had lost condition as the pastures had been dry. Her vet determined there was no significant parasite load. She asked the group for suggestions. Other farmers suggested she test for ketosis and Johne's disease. Another producer suggested she get her vet out to look for serious problems where ketosis might just be a symptom.

A farmer had a third lactation cow calve with a very swollen udder; teats were too large for the calf to nurse. There was very little milk, and milking out the colostrum was very difficult. A dairy liniment was recommended to be applied twice a day; milk out the colostrum for the calf by hand. ◆

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

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Ask the Vet

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enough energy. But just because it hasn't been a problem on your farm doesn't mean it won't be in the future.

It is helpful to know what cows are predisposed to ketosis to prevent it from happening. Cows that are at risk of ketosis are ones that have poor nutrition leading up to calving, poor nutrition after calving, cows that have varying degrees of milk fever, very high producing cows, and cows that are overweight at calving. Cows that are overweight at calving are at particular risk of severe ketosis, specifically if they are greater than 3.75 body condition score (BCS) at calving. This is because when cows with high BCS are in negative energy balance, i.e. when their energy intake doesn't match up to their energy needs, they have more fat to burn. The more fat they are mobilizing for their energy needs, the more toxins from ketones are in their bloodstream, leading to a case of severe neurologic ketosis. This can also lead to "fatty liver disease" because the fat that is being mobilized and metabolized has to pass through the liver. That fat clogs up the pathways in the liver, causing the liver to not function due to back up. A cow with severe ketosis and fatty liver disease becomes hard to treat because a malfunctioning liver makes it a lot harder to recover from disease. So, when you do not provide an overweight cow with proper nutrition before, at, and after calving, she will be at high risk for developing severe ketosis.

There are lots of factors in cows being overweight, some that we can control and some we can't. One important factor that we can control is getting cows pregnant on time, ideally in less than 120 days in milk (DIM). As you extend their open period past this point, you are risking either them having a longer lactation or a longer dry period, both of which can lead to overweight cows. As a lactation progresses and milk production decreases, they are apt to use the energy in their lactating diet to make body fat. A long dry period has a similar effect. While not all cows with long lactations or long dry periods will have an increased BCS, it does increase the risk of becoming overweight and therefore increased risk of severe ketosis.

What happens if you do have an overweight cow calving, and what happens if you do have a cow with severe ketosis? First, if you have an overweight cow about to calve, you can make sure she is getting a high energy diet with lots of good quality forages and that she has feed in front of her at all times. Make sure she gets a calcium bolus at calving, then again 12 hours later. Check her for ketosis starting at 3 DIM and continue to check her until she is 14 DIM, which is the highest risk time.

If an animal develops severe ketosis, this is urgent and she needs to be treated as soon as possible or the disease can progress. Severe ketosis, an animal that shows up with "Large" ketones on the urine test or a BHB blood test of >3.0 mmol/L, should be treated with intravenous dextrose and injectable B vitamins. You should then follow up with an oral treatment of 300cc of propylene glycol for 3-5 days. Propylene glycol was approved for organic use in 2019. If the cow is neurologic or down, I would suggest consulting with your veterinarian on care.

I wrote about breeding cows on time as an important factor. I know that time to first insemination is a controversial topic, but what I would like to stress is that body condition score is an important element around the decision to breed a cow past that 120 day mark. Severe ketosis is mostly avoidable but if this comes up on your farms hopefully this gives you tools to manage it and prevent it from happening again. ◆

Do you have a question for Dr. Locitzer, or an area you'd like her to focus on in future issue? Please send them to the NODPA News editor, noraowens@comcast.net who will share them with her.

Classified Ads

ANIMALS

FOR SALE: Organic calves, heifers and bred heifers, 100% Holstein, registered. Looking to sell 10-15 total. Price different for each age, call for more info: Glendon Mehuren II, Faithfulventurefarm@gmail.com, 207-342-4677

Location: Searsmont, ME

FOR SALE: Heifer Calves: We anticipate having 20+ heifer calves between now and February. As we do not need that many replacements, we will also be offering them for sale shortly after they are born. $150 each. These heifers are certified organic through VOF and can be registered. Our farm received a gold award from Organic Valley in 2022. Our cows have nice temperaments, good genetics and longevity. The oldest lady in the barn is 14. (This is why we don't need quite so many replacement heifers.) Contact Scott Bidwell at 802-730-2336; email: grmtjersey@gmail.com.

Location: Morrisville, VT.

FOR SALE: 9 organic bred heifers. Due now through December. Pure bred Jerseys, certified grass-fed, from a low SCC herd. Contact Steve at (802) 626-3258.

Location: East Burke, VT

FOR SALE: Murray gray herd sire out of Larry Lampmans herd 100% grass fed genetics. Easy to handle respects electric fence. Makes great looking heifer calves weaned at 500 lbs. on grass. Can cover a herd of about 30-40 head no problem. Asking $3,500 or OBO. Holstein Jersey cross herd sire. From a 100% grass fed genetic herd. Easy to handle respects electric fence. Can cover a herd of about 30-40 head, no problem. Asking $3,500 or OBO. Contact Andrew Kenderes, kofarm8987@gmail.com, 845-702-0766.

Location: Holland Patent, NY

COWS FOR SALE: Butterworks Farm and Business. Farm and Business for Sale, separately in Westfield, Vermont: Grass-fed organic dairy herd (40 milking, 30 youngstock). This is a closed herd of Jersey cows nurtured and organically managed for over 40 years, bred to A2-A2 since 2003 and 100% grass-fed since 2016. DHIA records kept for the 30+ years. **SEE FULL LISTING BELOW UNDER LAND/FARM FOR SALE.** Contact Christine Lazor, cmlazor@butterworksfarm.com, 802-624-0963.

Location: Westfield, VT

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

FOR SALE: New Idea 51' Elevator, $700.00. Write Alcuin Marthaler, 13417 County Road 79 SE, Osakis, MN 56360.

Location: Osakis, MN

FEED/GRAIN/HAY FOR SALE

FOR SALE: 4 x 4 Hay Baleage, certified organic, early first and second cuttings, $45 each, loaded at farm. Contact: Phillip Cutting, neros75@comcast.net; cell 802-380-4783 or 802-254-6982.

Location: Guildford Vermont

FOR SALE: CERTIFIED ORGANIC HAY/BALEAGE for 2023:

- Small square bales: 1st cutting $5 per bale – limited quantities
- Small square bales: 2nd cutting $6 per bale
- Small square bale bedding or mulch hay at $3 per bale
- Large square bales 3' x 3' x 7' 1st cutting grass hay at $75 per bale
- Large square bales 3' x 3' x 7' 2nd cutting grass hay at $90 per bale
- Baleage bales 4' x 4' 1st cutting $60 per bale.
- Round bales 4'x 5' twine wrapped 1st cutting dry grass hay at $50

All hay is stored under cover. Forage tests available. Tractor trailer load quantity discounts for small bales. We ship throughout the east coast and have multiple delivery quantities or pickup at the farm. Samples available. Contact Tony Marzolino, Marz Farm, 3624 Wilson Creek Rd, Berkshire, NY 13736. Cell/Text:315-378-5180, tmarzolino@yahoo.com, www.marzfarm.com.

Location: Berkshire, NY, NY Southern Tier between Binghamton and Ithaca in Tioga County

LAND/FARM FOR SALE:

FOR SALE: Butterworks Farm and Business. Farm and Business for Sale, separately in Westfield, Vermont: Business includes all farm and production equipment. Solid financial records available. Butterworks is well known for creating and delivering high quality artisan dairy through sustainable agriculture. Products include cream-top and nonfat plain yogurts as well as cultured buttermilk, maple sweetened yogurts and kefir. Markets include many Vermont stores and four distributors serving most of the Northeast since the 1980s. Products are currently

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Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance (NODPA)
c/o Ed Maltby
30 Keets Road
Deerfield, MA 01342

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Classified Ads - continued from page 35

produced in an on-farm production facility. Grass-fed organic dairy herd (40 milking, 30 youngstock). This is a closed herd of Jersey cows nurtured and organically managed for over 40 years, bred to A2-A2 since 2003 and 100% grass-fed since 2016. DHIA records kept for the 30+ years. -Tractors, manure spreaders, haying and some tillage equipment -vat pasteurizers -cheese vat -bottle filler -cup filler -cream separator -COP and CIP wash systems -4 electric pumps and stainless-steel piping -2 bulk tanks Business for sale $760,000 Property in Westfield, Vermont for sale or lease: Butterworks Farm operates on 167 acres VLT conserved land in Westfield, Vermont. Property includes 2 homes (3 BR, 1 BA and 3 BR, 1 ½ BA), -39 cow tie-stall with pipeline milking system in post and beam structure (1982) -60x120' hoop barn for loose housing -2 storage sheds for bales and equipment -2 artesian wells, 2 springs, fencing, lanes, pasture infrastructure Production facility (sq footage) is on second floor of main barn and includes -incubator room -three walk-in coolers -hydraulic pallet lift, -loading dock -large, comfortable third floor office -30 hp Columbia steam boiler -200 gallon capacity ice maker -two story post and beam granary with monitor roof, grain bins and cup elevator Real Estate for sale $760,000. Contact Christine Lazor, cmlazor@butterworksfarm.com, 802-624-0963.

Location: Westfield, VT