

December 2008

AGENDA

Monday, February 9, 2009

- 1:00 pm Registration Opens
 2:30 pm Pro Dairy Forum
Profitable Dairy Farming in the Northeast
Key Issues: Challenging your farm customers; CAFO, carbon footprint, dairy herd management, feed efficiency. Dr. Tom Overton, Assistant Director, ProDairy Program & Mr. Karl Czymmek, ProDairy Specialist in Agronomy/Nutrient Management
 5:00 pm Welcome Reception

Tuesday, February 10, 2009

- 8:00 am NEAFA Annual Meeting
 9:00 am **American Feed Industry Association Update and Outlook**
 Mr. Joel Newman, President and CEO
 9:45 am **Dairy Industry Production and Price Perspectives: What's Ahead for 2009**
 Dr. Mark Stephenson, Senior Extension Associate, Cornell University
 11:00am **Agricultural Policy and Politics: Insight into the New Administration**
 Mr. Robert Gray, Bob Gray, LLC, Agricultural Public Policy Expert
 11:45am **Animal Agriculture in the US: Policy Trends and Their Implications**
 Ms. Kay Johnson Smith, Executive Vice President, Animal Agriculture Alliance
 12:30pm Lunch
 1:30 pm Networking at the Hospitality Room
 5:30 pm Boston Tea Party Reception
 7:00 pm Annual Banquet **Speaking Up for Agriculture**
 Keynote Speaker/Entertainer: Trent Loos, Rancher, Advocate of Agriculture

84th
Annual Meeting
& Tea Party

Serving the
Northeast
Ag & Feed
Industry



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Sponsorships are available,
 as well as on-line registration!

Look for details in your mailbox or on our
 website at www.northeastalliance.com.



Trent Loos

Rancher and Advocate for Agriculture
2009 Keynote Speaker

Sporting a black cowboy hat and handlebar moustache, Trent Loos is a farmer, rancher and radio host with a special love for folks who lead the same life he has chosen. This sixth generation resource provider specializes in supplying seed stock to pork producers and beef cattle.

Alliance Board Meets with Cornell Agriculture Dean

The Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance Board of Directors held its December 8th meeting on the Cornell University campus and spent an hour with Dean Susan Henry of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs). Dean Henry spoke about the opportunities and challenges facing the College.

Currently Cornell enjoys a strong undergraduate candidate pool to CALs and shows preference to students from farming backgrounds or who have been active in FFA or 4-H. The Dairy Fellows Program provides a popular undergraduate curriculum with 140 students and the new Agriculture Science Degree Program is growing in numbers. The Department of Applied Economics and Management is contending with declining enrollment within their traditional farm business management/farm finance programs, but the undergraduate business program was ranked 4th in the nation in 2008. Dean Henry is committed to keeping a base in agricultural economics research and education.

While there is a strong pre-vet student population at Cornell, a minority of the students are interested in pursuing careers in food animal medicine, mirroring a trend seen nationwide. Efforts are underway to incentivize students pursuing large animal practice. In the not too distant future, the Animal Science Department will face the challenge of recruiting new professors to replace the outstanding faculty members who have contributed to Cornell's status as a premier institution over the past several decades.

In addition to the traditional undergraduate and graduate programs, Cornell serves as the administrative hub for several other NY based programs, such as Pro-Dairy, that support the dairy industry.

Pro-Dairy was begun in 1988 to increase the profitability and competitiveness of NY dairy businesses through industry applied research and educational programs.

Plan to attend the Pro-Dairy seminar at the 2009 Annual Meeting and Tea Party in Boston February 9 and 10.

While Cornell continues to develop innovative approaches to support the dairy industry, it is facing many challenges shared by land grant universities nationwide. A 5% system wide cut for all State University of New York schools has been absorbed but more cuts are expected in funding received through the Department of Agriculture and Markets. In addition, the SUNY budget for FY 2009-2010 will likely impose an additional financial strain to the College.

Dean Henry encouraged relationships with land grant universities throughout the northeast to ensure producer needs are being met. The Alliance Board expressed its support for undergraduate education for future producers and the continuation of programs with a focus on farm profitability. Dr. Henry encouraged on-going communication with Board members. It is evident the Dean is facing serious challenges as she attempts to meet the concurrent needs for research, extension, and undergraduate education.



Cornell CALS Dean Susan Henry (center) met with Feed Alliance Board members on December 8.

Cargill's Martinsburg PA Plant - 2008 Feed Mill of the Year

The American Feed Industry Association and *Feedstuffs* magazine are pleased to name the Cargill Animal Nutrition plant in Martinsburg, Pa., as the 2008 Feed Mill of the Year.

The Cargill plant, managed by Charles Lickteig, is located in the heart of Pennsylvania's dairy country, and it manufactures dairy feed exclusively, with the majority of it in bulk form. The plant's associated mineral business, formerly operated as Young's, is 90-percent dairy-focused. The plant is a key part of Cargill's North East Region operations with regional management provide by Alliance Board member Rob Sheffer.

The annual Feed Mill of the Year award recognizes overall excellence in feed manufacturing operations. Increased safety, quality, regulatory compliance, operating efficiencies and overall industry awareness of food safety are among the criteria reviewed for each applicant. More than 60 feed companies from across the nation competed for this year's award.

"The quality of this year's candidates was quite impressive as was their dedication to quality control and safety standards," said Keith Epperson, vice president of manufacturing and training for AFIA. He noted the Cargill plant in Martinsburg stood out because of its outstanding housekeeping, dedication to the local community and safety and its sustained business growth.

Compiled with information from AFIA

Dairy Heifer Imports from Canada

In November 2007 the ban on live cattle imports from Canada was lifted, allowing resumed trade with the US. Imports of dairy heifers and slaughter cattle over 30 months of age had been banned since May of 2003 in an attempt by USDA to limit US exposure to BSE from imported cattle. The USDA had anticipated imports would quickly reach the level of 60,000 head per year as experienced prior to the ban. Year to date figures from USDA for December 6, 2008 indicate only 44,838 head have been imported for the year. Softening import numbers is most likely due to a weak US dollar and high feed prices for most of the year, leading to a decreased market for imported heifers.

Import numbers were strong early in 2008 with weekly imports commonly exceeding 1000 head. Even with a weakening Canadian dollar, imports have dropped off through the fall reaching a low of 273 head for the week ending November 29th. The week ending December 6 saw 379 heifers imported from Canada. In November 2008 there were 9.276 million milk cows in the US, up 5,000 from October 2008 and up 107,000 from November 2007. Despite renewed access to Canadian imports, dairy cow numbers are forecast to decline slightly in the US in 2009 to 9.245 million head.

As recently as August 2008 the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) had requested a reclosing of the border for dairy imports, citing continued risk of BSE from animals imported from Canada. In a letter sent last August to Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer, NMPF President and CEO Jerry Kozak noted that the USDA's Office of Inspector General, in a report finished last March, "suggests USDA has problems tracking and ensuring the health of cattle imported from Canada." NMPF requested the USDA to consider closing the border to animals to be used for breeding purposes, which would include dairy heifers.



Alliance Prepares for Upcoming Legislative Sessions

The Alliance Board on December 8th adopted their legislative priorities for 2009. The list was developed with input from Executive Director Rick Zimmerman and Government Relations Director Louise Calderwood based on issues that are arising in NE states.

Calderwood traveled to Augusta ME on November 24-25 to meet with John Nutting (D) and Wendy Peih (D), co-chairs of the ME Legislative Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The upcoming session will find the legislators wrestling with a \$400 million state budget deficit, pressure to consolidate the state department of agriculture with other departments, continued demands for increased regulatory oversight of GE technology, and heightened activity regarding farm animal welfare legislation. Conversations with state Farm Bureau directors in other New England states and NY confirm similar issues being of concern through out the NE.

President John Mitchell will be reaching out via letter to key legislators in the Northeast as the new legislative sessions are called to order. Both Rick Zimmerman and Louise Calderwood are available to arrange meetings between Alliance members and legislators. We aim to increase awareness of the Alliance's position on the topics listed below. The Alliance strives to support a reasonable approach to agricultural issues and maintain the ability of farmers to remain economically viable.

2009 Legislative Priorities

- The Alliance supports the rights of farmers to engage in acceptable animal husbandry practices in the management of their herds and flocks.
- Towns are encouraged to adopt local language supporting farmers' rights to maintain and enhance agricultural activity. The Alliance recognizes the role of state departments and agencies of agriculture in regulation of agricultural activity.
- The Alliance supports the rights of farmers to utilize scientifically sound technology in the management of their farms.
- The Alliance supports utilization of the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 (TSCA) as the basis for state and federal chemicals management systems.
- The Alliance opposes NYS DOT large truck route restrictions on state roads in central New York.
- The Alliance supports adequate funding for our Colleges of Agriculture and Cooperative Extension throughout the Northeast.
- The Alliance recognizes the important responsibilities of our state departments of agriculture and supports adequate funding to these agencies to assure that their work is carried out.

Northeast Ag & Feed Alliance

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.northeastalliance.com

NEAFA Calendar of Events

Dairy Feed & Nutrition Conf.

April 7, 2009

Location: Doubletree Hotel
Syracuse, NY

Dairy Feed & Nutrition Conf.

April 9, 2009

Fireside Inn
West Lebanon, NH

Golf for Good Works Annual Golf Tournament

June 25, 2009

Turningstone Casino & Resort
Verona, NY

The Alliance is broadening the readership of our newsletter to include others interested in agricultural news. Please help us expand our e-mail list for receipt of the monthly newsletter featuring articles of interest to agricultural regulators, Farm Bureaus, land grants and other agricultural post secondary schools. E-mail addresses can be sent to Rick Zimmerman at zimmerman@zga-llc.com, please include "newsletter" in the subject line. Thank you for your help in expanding our readership.

CAFO Deadline Looms

Large CAFO operations have until February 27, 2009 to comply with new CAFO rules or be certified in compliance with a properly recognized state permit program. Before that date, poultry, beef cattle, dairy, hog and all other concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) must either have National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for any discharges of manure runoff into water bodies, or have third-party reviews and records to show that they do not discharge. Farmers who apply manure to the land as a crop nutrient also must meet the deadline. A Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) must be in place with the proper records to show that their land application practices meet the terms of their NMP.

Although EPA did not release the final regulations until Oct. 31, the rules in their current form have been in the works for months. Therefore, EPA said farmers and ranchers have had plenty of time to prepare and did not extend the February deadline.

Northeast farmers have been eligible for state and federal funding and technical assistance since the mid 1990's to help them address the necessary water quality and record keeping requirements necessary for CAFO compliance.

All CAFO's in New York are currently guided by a State administered permit program and thus are subject to a separate timeline. The Department of Environmental Conservation recently released its proposed changes to the state system and will be hosting public hearings on the proposals early next year. Details of the proposed changes will be provided in January's newsletter.

Local NRCS offices can help with doing on-farm evaluations, developing NMPs and giving producers a list of third-party technical service providers in their area. Furthermore, most NE states have technical assistance housed in their state agriculture departments or agencies to guide farmers through the CAFO process

Air Quality Reporting On Hold

A recent action by the Bush administration has granted CAFO's a reprieve from emission reporting under the EPA's Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and The Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA). Originally scheduled for implementation in 2009, the provisions of CERCLA and EPCRA as they relate to agriculture have been extremely contentious.

The administrative reporting exemption granted by the Bush Administration will release CAFOs from particular notification requirements under CERCLA/EPCRA. Specifically, the exemption would apply to the release of gaseous substances from animal manure and related animal wastes. This proposed exemption from administrative reporting under CERCLA/EPCRA is not intended to and will not limit in any way the Agency's ability to require farmers to take response and abatement actions or to impose CERCLA liabilities for the release of hazardous materials, or to administer any other provisions of CERCLA/EPCRA.

At the end of 2007, EPA suggested that rules under CERCLA/ EPCRA be amended to exclude the reporting of air emissions that emanate from animal waste on farms. Many farm organizations and other advocacy groups responded to the EPA's request for comments on the Administrative Reporting Exemption for Air Releases of Hazardous Substances from Animal Waste.

Currently research is being conducted on livestock air emissions under leadership of the National Air Emissions Monitoring Study housed at Purdue University. Data collection is estimated to be completed by July, 2009 and recommendations submitted to EPA in 2010.

Compiled with input from American Farm Bureau and NMPF.