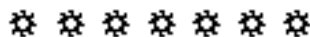




TAILS AND TASSELS

February 2009 Vol. 11, No. 2

Welcome back to the newsletter by and for members of New York Certified Organic, Inc..
We are a group of New York farmers formed to meet the educational needs of non-chemical crop and dairy farmers.



ANOTHER GREAT NYCO MEETING !

Tuesday February 10 10 AM – 3 PM
Jordan Hall Auditorium, NYS Ag Experiment Station, Geneva

**** COME ENJOY THE THIRD ****
**** NYCO MEETING OF THE 2008-9 SEASON. ****

FINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT IN CHALLENGING AND CHANGING TIMES Advice from the Experts

in conjunction with the NY Organic Dairy Initiative



- * As always, bring some good food to share with your friends for our *
* always bountiful and delicious dish-to-pass lunch. *
- * All are invited - you DON'T have to be a member of NYCO to attend! *
* We just want to see YOU! *

WHAT IS NEW YORK CERTIFIED ORGANIC (NYCO)?? -

New York Certified Organic is a group of organic grain and dairy farmers in New York that has been meeting together since 1994 for daytime meetings during the winter months. NYCO meetings focus on practical information and expertise on organic weed control, soil fertility management, pest control, crop production, dairy issues and grazing, alternative crops, marketing and pricing, machinery and grain storage. We are a group of farmers, led by farmers, with topics designed for and by farmers, with more time for open discussion than for 'expert presentations'. We are not associated with any certification agency, or other organization. There is no cost for attending the NYCO meetings. We just ask you to bring a dish of something good to share with everyone at our potluck lunch.

AT THIS FEBRUARY NYCO MEETING

Financing - it is one of those unpleasant topics that few of us want to "waste " our time on. and yet each year, we often find we need help to get the crop in, to upgrade or maintain our equipment, and to manage our finances. Several months ago, we were approached by a group of FSA loan officers who asked if we knew of some means for them to better reach the organic farming community. We offered a forum at the February NYCO meeting for them to present their programs, but more importantly, to answer any questions you may have.

We will be considering the financial side of risk management in the morning. We will be joined by Joann Rogers, Ontario County FSA Executive Director from Ontario County would like to talk about the farm programs and how they can help the farmers manage risks. She will discuss the farm loan programs and how they can help the producers manage their risks.

Peter Stoep, Farm loan officer from Canandaigua and John Liddington, Farm loan manager from Auburn will be with us to help answer questions farmers have about FSA programs and farm management issues. Fay Benson, of Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Cornell Small Farms Program, will speak on AGR-Lite crop insurance and the new Dairy Livestock Gross Margin product.

We hope to have other representatives of Crop Insurance and financial institutions who can present their programs and answer your questions.

NAP (NON-INSURED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM) Coverage Deadlines

Noninsured Crop Disaster applications are due at different times according to the crop being insured. Producers should apply for Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage using form CCC-471 (Application for Coverage). Related service fees are due when the application is filed. The application and service fee **MUST** be filed by the crop deadline date. Contact your local FSA office for the filing dates for your crops, Ontario County's FSA number is (585)-394-0525 ext. 2.

The service fee is \$250 per crop per county or \$750 per producer per county. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$1875 per producer for individuals with farming interests in multiple counties. Limited resource producers may request a waiver for service fees. To qualify, a producer must be a landowner, tenant or sharecropper who shares in the risk of producing an eligible crop.

The following spring seeded crops have a March 15, 2009 NAP application deadline: Artichokes, beans, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, buckwheat, cantaloupe, carrots, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, crenshaw melon, cucumbers, eggplant, gourds, hops, Jerusalem artichokes, kohlrabi, Korean golden melon, millet, okra, parsnips, peas, peppers, potatoes, pumpkins, rutabaga, grain sorghum, squash, sunflowers, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, tomatillos, watermelon, yam.

Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum amount is \$5000.

Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers loans for farmers and ranchers to purchase farmland and finance agricultural operations. FSA loan programs are designed to help producers who are temporarily unable to obtain private or commercial credit. In many cases, applicants are beginning farmers who have insufficient net worth to qualify for financing through a commercial lender. In other instances, borrowers might have suffered setbacks from natural disasters or might be persons with limited resources.

Farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained as direct loans for a maximum of up to \$300,000. Currently guaranteed loans can reach a maximum indebtedness of \$1,094,000. Emergency loans are always direct loans for farmers who may have suffered physical or production losses in disaster areas designated by a Presidential or Secretarial disaster declaration. Rural Youth Loans, Loans to Beginning Farmers and loans for socially disadvantaged applicants are also available through FSA.



March 17 - the LAST 2009 NYCO MEETING of the season (and this is definitely a 'don't miss it' meeting!) -

March 17, Tuesday - Farm Energy Conservation and Alternative Sources including Biofuels and Oil Seed Crops. Back by popular demand will be our good friend, Ontario organic grain farmer and processor, Harro Wehrmann. He will be talking about his experiences growing and pressing oil seeds. We also will see a demonstration of a small-scale oil seed press the Experiment Station owns, and hear from others who use biofuels in trucks and farm vehicles. Since this will be the last meeting of the season, we will probably also cover strategies and equipment for effective organic weed control, and changing markets in 2009.

RISK MANAGEMENT IN CHALLENGING TIMES - Part 3

With the arrival of 2009, dire economic predictions are everywhere. Talk to any of your conventional neighbors who are dairy farmers and the sense of panic is tangible as the milk price plummets. But in the organic community, we aren't immune to panic. It seems like we're all asking "will this recession change the buying habits of our customers - and if it does, how will that affect me? "

After the last issue of Tails and Tassels, one NYCO member sent the following risk management ideas, based on his experience as an organic farmer -

- ❖ Consider planting some of your acres in shorter-season corn so that harvest can start earlier and you have an easy time getting done each fall before winter weather sets in.
- ❖ Also consider planting shorter-season soybeans so that you can get soybean harvest done in good time to get started on corn harvest. Consider planting some feed-grade soybeans instead of food-grade soybeans. The additional premium price of food-grade beans may not be offset for your particular situation or by the usually decreased yield you get from food grade varieties.
- ❖ It is essential to do a good job of adequate weeding and cultivating. Have the right equipment and qualified operators that know how to operate the equipment!
- ❖ Some of us have 'tough ground'. A particularly difficult field that may yield a great crop one year out of ten may take too much of your management time and distract you from doing your best on the rest of your ground. It may not be worth your time.
- ❖ Farm management experts sometimes use this baseball analogy, "it is better to get a base hit each year rather than striking out while going for a home run". This could be likened to getting 100 or 125 or 150 bushels of corn with a shorter-season variety rather than trying to get an additional 25 bushels from a longer-season variety. For soybeans, perhaps this would be planting feed-grade varieties of soybeans in the group 00-1 which may get 25-45 bushels per acre instead of a longer-season feed-grade bean, which could yield 55-60 bu/A. Going for the home run can pay big, but over the long run often the base hits pay just as well with less risk.
- ❖ Shorter-season soybeans have the additional advantage of making small grain planting easier in the fall. Planting small grains in the spring can interfere with other crops planted on time such as corn and beans.
- ❖ Marketing - it is important to sell to a buyer who is bonded and appears to be adequately capitalized. In other words, if you sell to a licensed buyer, you will get paid regardless of when, or even if, they get paid by whomever they sell to. There are no such guarantees if you sell to an unlicensed buyer.

Do you have other ideas for valuable Risk Management ideas? Let's pool our ideas and include them in future Tails and Tassels issues. Send us your ideas by email (kandmhfarm@sprintmail), by mail (Box 361, Penn Yan, NY 14527) or by phone (315-531-1038) and they will be included in future issues!

PAPER FARMING (that is, if it works on paper, it still may not work on your farm, but if it doesn't work on paper, then you'd better start getting worried!) *a bucket-full of opinions, from Klaas Martens*

A lot of farmers had a rare combination of great yields and record prices last year. It pays to use lots of inputs in a year like the one we just had - or at least we can get away with buying a lot of inputs when both the prices and the weather are good. But - farmers always tend to farm according to last year's variables. We

know logically that it doesn't make sense to assume that our weather, prices and expenses will be the same next year as they were last year, but there's always something inside of us wants to believe that they will be.

Each year when we make our cropping plans, I think we need to do a little reality check. We can't predict the future, but there are only three possibilities for next year's prices. They can go up, go down or stay the same. The same is true for yields and expenses. When yields and prices are both very high, I have to believe that they are more likely to fall than to go even higher. We already know what a lot of our expenses will do. Almost everything we price ahead this winter is going to be a lot more expensive than it was last year.

When planning ahead, we need to take a close look at our expenses and our possible prices & yields to see where our breakeven points are and to evaluate the risks we are taking in growing our crops next year. Let's start with the risk of a total crop failure from hail, drought, a plague of insects, or some new crop disease. If we have a good idea as to what our input costs will be, plus the land cost and machinery/ custom work charge, we have a good starting point. If we take the figures NYCO farmers arrived at in 2005 for corn and add about 20% for inflation, we might guess the average cost could be about \$470/acre next year with at least \$300 of that being out of pocket cash expenses. It may be possible to cover the out of pocket 'cash' expenses of growing corn with crop insurance if we are careful with our input costs. Without figuring a reasonable estimate of input costs, we really can't begin the job of managing our risk.

I like to lay out 3 scenarios for yield and 3 for price when making my projections. I use my 'best guess' for price with a lower end price and a higher one to try to get the range of possibilities and then I do the same with yields. That gives me a way to look at a range of possibilities and to decide how likely I will be to make a profit and to see how great my risk of loss is. If we continue the above example, and use a high yield of 120bu/a, an average yield of 100bu/a, and a low end yield of 70 bu/a, we can plug those numbers in. Then taking a high price of \$350/T (9.80/bu) medium of \$321/T (9.00/bu) and a low of \$282/T (7.90/bu) , we see income projections ranging from \$553/acre to \$1176 with estimated costs of \$470/acre. This example shows that corn is a reasonably safe crop as long as the yield, price, and cost figures I'm using are well supported numbers for the farm doing the projections.

If however the farm doing these projections had a crop history that was 30 bushels per acre lower than the examples I used, and their costs were at \$570/acre, the projected income range would only be \$316 to \$882 for a net of -\$254 to +\$312. Even average yields and prices in this scenario would only net \$63/acre. It would be risky to plant a crop in such a case knowing that both prices and yields would have to be good to return a reasonable profit per acre. In a case like this, it would be important to trim input costs as far as possible and to look at alternative crops in order to improve the chance of making a profit and reduce the risk of a serious loss in the event of bad weather. Often it is possible to improve such a situation by switching the poorest fields to a less expensive crop.

When cutting input cost, don't further reduce potential yield by cutting out those inputs that are necessary to produce a crop. Eliminating needed lime or skipping manure on fields with low soil tests will only reduce profits more. The first place to save is by only growing heavy nitrogen-feeding crops (like corn) where there is a good legume cover crop to plow down. Another place is by replacing expensive low analysis materials that need to be hauled long distances. For example: a cow manure-based compost with 5# per ton or less each of N, P & K needs to cost less than \$10/ton as applied to be an economical crop fertilizer. If it needs to be hauled very far, the trucking alone will exceed the fertility value. When large amounts of fertility are needed, it may be more profitable to switch to less demanding crops than to buy too many inputs all at once. Always consider the cost of any input against the value of the crop it is used on. I once had to tell a would be vendor of very high quality overpriced vermicompost: "You can't sell fertilizer that costs far more than the crop you recommend using it on is ever going to be worth!" Beware of inputs that promise huge yield increases. They are likely to cost so much that it will take huge (and unlikely) yield increases just to pay for them.

THE RISING COST OF PRODUCTION?? What exactly does that mean?

At the December 14, 2005 NYCO meeting, more than 30 New York organic grain farmers pooled their cost analysis information and developed a method to estimate what it cost them to grow a bushel of corn. This cost of production is especially critical information – in 2005 as it is now. We need to know whether we are making money on our enterprises, and whether the prices we're being paid are fair.

It is important to do this kind of cost of production analysis on a regular basis, identifying which input costs that have changed and estimating how much we are making now, as compared to what we were making 2 years ago. In 2005, organic corn was selling for between \$180-200/T in New York. At harvest in 2008, organic corn was selling for \$350-375/T, down some from the high of \$400-430/T it reached during the 2007-2008 winter. Anyone willing to project the price of corn at harvest in 2009 is simply guessing – it really all depends on what happens in the greater economy between then and now.

At the 2005 meeting, in order to estimate our costs, we first discussed the best way to break the various cost components apart. It is relatively easy to calculate in the costs of purchased inputs, but it proved much more difficult to estimate our non-out-of-pocket expenses. Putting a value on our own labor and time is difficult - but important. We decided to use area custom rates for all field operations because they are fairly reflective of both the labor and machinery costs involved, even though many agreed that published custom rates do not always accurately show what farmers actually have to pay.

We discovered that the biggest difference between the 30 farms was in the land cost component. Because it is difficult to take into account all costs for owned land, we decided to use an average per acre rental value, which in 2005 ranged from under \$30/A in some areas to well over \$100/A other places. This range significantly changes the profit margin if all other costs are the similar. These land rent prices have risen some over the past 3 years, in a few areas the change has been dramatic, but in many other areas in New York, land rent hasn't changed much.

We also found there was great variation in what people estimated their fertility costs at, depending on whether there was a good plow-down crop, what the fertility status of the ground was, how much of the needed fertility was purchased, how long the farmer had been 'organic', and the sources for materials. Certainly good planning and diverse crop rotation with legume cover crops can reduce the costs of purchased fertility inputs, as can wise 'shopping around'.

IN January 2008, because of rapidly rising costs of diesel & LP, we updated these figures. Again for 2009, we update them again with projected costs. These are merely "best guesses", based on average costs and income, but they do give us some way to compare costs with profit.

So – here is the comparison. As you read this, please compare these numbers to your actual costs.

Organic 2005 CORN – in general, yields range from 2.25T/A (80 bu/A) in poorer locations to 4.5T/A (160 bu/A) in very good locations. For the sake of convenience, we chose to do our calculations with an average yield of 100 bu/A

\$30 – 100/A – land costs (approx rental value of land or similar land to account for taxes, investment etc)

\$35/A for seed

\$75/A for fertilizer (chicken compost, lime, gypsum & starter)

\$75/A plowing, secondary tillage, planting

\$25/A 2x early season weeder passes, 2 x cultivations

\$30/A harvest

\$8/A crop insurance

\$10/A - miscellaneous – certification costs , certification record keeping, interest, etc

\$60/A hauling, grain drying, storing (drying can go higher in a wet season or hauling varies a lot depending on whether you have to haul far to storage or market)

Total 2005 Costs - \$355-425/A and if assuming 100 bu/A, then the 2005 cost of production was approximately \$3.55–4.25/bu or \$142/T

Approximate 2008 organic CORN –For the sake of convenience, we chose again to do our calculations with an average yield of 100 bu/A. You can better 'customize' your actual costs of production based on your actual bu/A yield.

\$30 – 140/A land costs (approx rental value of land or similar land to account for taxes, investment etc)

\$45/A for seed

\$90/A for fertilizer (chicken compost, lime, gypsum & starter)

\$95/A plowing, secondary tillage, planting

\$30/A 2x early season weeder passes, 2 x cultivations

\$38/A harvest
\$11/A crop insurance
\$12/A - miscellaneous – certification costs , certification record keeping, interest, etc
\$80/A hauling, grain drying, storing (drying can go higher in a wet season or hauling varies a lot depending on whether you have to haul far to storage or market)

Total 2008 Costs - approx \$460/A and if 100 bu/A, then the approximate 2008 cost of production was approximately \$4.60/bu or \$165/T

Projected 2009 organic CORN – calculations are based on an average yield of 100 bu/A.

\$30 – 140/A land costs (approx rental value of land or similar land to account for taxes, investment etc)
\$45/A for seed
\$100/A for fertilizer (chicken compost, lime, gypsum & starter)
\$95/A plowing, secondary tillage, planting
\$30/A 2x early season weeder passes, 2 x cultivations
\$38/A harvest
\$11/A crop insurance
\$12/A - miscellaneous – certification costs , certification record keeping, interest, etc
\$80/A hauling, grain drying, storing (drying can go higher in a wet season or hauling varies a lot depending on whether you have to haul far to storage or market)

Total Costs - approx \$470/A and if assuming 100 bu/A, then the projected 2009 cost of production is approximately \$4.70/bu or \$168/T

Based on your actual costs and yields, do you agree or disagree with this analysis? If it is close to your figures, is the current price of \$400/T for organic corn a fair price? What price would give you adequate income while still being fair to New York organic dairy farmers?

It ALL depends on whether consumers keep buying organic milk, doesn't it? – well, its not quite that simple.

Another bucket-full of opinions, this time from Mary-Howell Martens

The other day, while I was waiting in line at the grocery store, I chatted with the woman ahead of me, the mother of one of my son's friends. I was intrigued by the contents of her shopping cart, which I think offer useful insight into the buying patterns of the people we are most dependent on. We tend to think of organic milk consumers as being the "urban executive" crowd, but Judy is a teacher's aide at the Elementary School, her husband is a mechanic at small manufacturing company, hired to maintain their machinery. They have a modest house in town and several children. She was buying organic milk, carrots, celery, applesauce, and flour – the basic food items. She also had other non-organic food products such as juice, bread, salsa, and spaghetti, plus the usual cleaning items. She didn't have any products I would classify as 'luxury' food items – no potato chips, organic or otherwise! But she did have several cartons of organic milk. She said her children like the taste of organic milk better than non-organic milk, but that she and her husband don't drink much because it is pretty expensive.

I think as farmers, we may not be always aware of how dependent we are on people like Judy to continue to invest in organic milk even when their personal finances shrink and become less secure. Our state budget is in terrible shape, and that is likely will result school budget cuts. Companies are reducing staff. As long as Judy's family can afford organic milk, I believe she will buy it for her children. But unfortunately she is one of those 'demographics' who is most vulnerable to the fragile economy. To be perfectly honest, if we weren't eating mostly food we raise and preserve, I doubt I could justify buying all organic food for my family on our budget.

The same day I visited with Judy, I spoke to one of our grain farmer suppliers who insisted that the only way he'd sell us his corn was if we raised our price by over \$50/ton. I declined his offer. If we were to pay what he asked, the corn would be over \$500/T by the time it arrived, ground, at a dairy farm. Would our dairy

customers be able to afford this at their current milk prices? I'm afraid that most would not. Usually when the corn price goes up, the demand for organic corn cuts back. Ultimately, does that benefit the grain farmers? Isn't it usually better to sell your entire crop at a moderate profit than only part of it at a high one?

Most of the items in Judy's cart were store brand or private branded organic or were from the large California organic vegetable farms, because that is all that is available in our grocery store in January. We used to be able to buy Lundberg rice, Eden canned beans, Nature's Path Cookies and Once Again Nut Butter peanut butter – the original organic processors owned by the committed pioneers of the organic movement. Within the past year, I've noticed that most of these company brands have been replaced by private brands carrying alluring names such as 'Nature's Promise' and 'Full Circle' or with store brands such as 'Wegman's Organic'. Locally, we no longer have the choice to buy from those companies who 'grew up organically' with us, actively cooperating with and encouraging farmers while pressuring the USDA to enforce strict organic standards.

I was pleased to see that Judy's organic milk from a company that buys from our New York organic dairy farmers, even though it is more expensive than the private label milk. In our grocery store, the private label milk sells for \$3.79/carton while the Horizon sells for \$4.19/carton. I've also noticed that our grocery store shelves the private label at eye level, the Horizon milk around knee level, probably because they make more margin on it. Who knows, perhaps some stores might even add a little extra margin to the Horizon and Organic Valley milk just to make the private label milk more attractive. Judy admitted that the lower price of the private label milk is certainly attractive right now, but she didn't know that all milk cartons are stamped with a code that identifies where the milk was processed and primarily sourced. Milk processed NY is coded "36". Her Horizon milk did have the "36" on it, but the private brand milk is stamped "08". That indicates the milk comes from Colorado – almost certainly from Aurora Dairy, the huge mega-industrial organic dairy that is flooding the market fairly anonymously. And so, private labeling comes to organic milk!

As both organic grain and dairy farmers, we must be aware of these huge Western industrial organic farms who do not need our grain. If our local dairy farmers can't compete against this very real threat, we will lose our grain market, or we will be 'negotiated' to a much lower price – that indeed is the bottom line.

Grain farmers depend on dairy farmers being able to afford their grain. Dairy farmers depend on consumers being able to afford their milk. Consumers depend on their jobs providing a living wage. When any part of this chain breaks, we all will suffer. In this rapidly changing economy, it is really difficult to know when we will reach a point when a critical piece breaks, resulting in unexpected consequences. It may be even hard to recognize the critical pieces until they go. In any economy, usually it is not sustainable long-term if one essential group benefits at the expense of another essential group. Will our corn supplier be able to sell his corn at the high price? Yes, maybe, because there are always farmers and feed mills desperate to buy corn at any price come September. I'm just not going to worry about that. We'll be OK this year regardless. But what about next year?

The next day we received a fat envelope from a commercial seed company that we are technically dealers for, even though we haven't ever sold their Roundup Ready and Yield Gard products. This was a lengthy communication concerning the "stewardship obligations" of dealers selling Monsanto trait seeds, with the required dealer agreement and a sample farmer technology agreement. These documents give the term 'the fine print' a whole new meaning – I think the grower agreement is printed in '4 point' print! Both contracts wrap the signer up tight, granting Monsanto a truly astounding armory of invasive privileges. As organic farmers, we are very grateful to be off that treadmill . . . for now. But what do we have to do to stay off?

A recent NY Times article stated: "The economy is falling faster than Washington can get it moving. The abyss is widening. Of the 30 companies in the Dow Jones industrial index, 22 have announced job cuts since October. Unemployment is up in all 50 states, with layoffs at high-tech companies (Microsoft) and low (Caterpillar), and everything in between. The December job loss in retailing is the worst since 1939. The new-home sales rate has fallen to its all-time low since record-keeping began in 1963. But what are Americans still buying? Big Macs, Campbell's soup, Hershey's chocolate and Spam — the four food groups of the apocalypse."

As this economy stumbles, it is very tempting to cheer the comeuppance of the Wall Street Fat Cats, to moralize about how 'a little belt-tightening is good for everyone' and be grateful that 'at least its not me . . . yet.'" Sometimes it is hard to remember how much the financial insecurity of both urban executives and teachers aides can affect upstate New York organic grain farmers, dairy farmers, grain buyers etc - AND all the many different businesses, communities, and organizations depending on us.



Classified Advertisements

If you want to place a free classified ad in upcoming newsletters for the certified organic products you have for sale on your farm, contact Mary-Howell Martens, 315-536-9879 or kandmhfarm@sprintmail.com.

- **Buying ORGANIC grains** - corn, soybeans, oats, barley, triticale, wheat, peas Lakeview Organic Grain 315-531-1038
 - **NOFA-NY Certified Organic Field Crop and Pasture Seed** –Hybrid and OP corn – Blue River, Viking, and American Organic Seed Co corn hybrids plus improved open pollinated corn, oats, wheat, barley, rye, triticale, alfalfa, buckwheat, forage mixes, red clover seed, pasture grasses. Non-GMO inoculant Order early for good supply. Lakeview Organic Grain, Penn Yan, NY 315 -531-1038 more info - www.lakevieworganicgrain.com
 - **NOFA-NY Certified Organic dairy, calf, heifer, beef, chicken (broiler and layer), pig, turkey FEED** - we specialize in custom blends for your feed needs and Fertrell mixes. Also CRYSTAL CREEK animal health products. We have organic liquid molasses and organic alfalfa pellets. Lakeview Organic Grain LLC, Penn Yan, NY – call Daniel Hoover or Mary-Howell Martens, 315-531-1038 or info@lakevieworganicgrain.com
 - **Composted poultry manure fertilizer**, Brett Kreher, 716-759-6802.
 - **Fertrell fertilizers and animal minerals**, Justin Jeanroy 518-993-3452
 - **Gypsum**, John Saeli, 315-585-9826
- PLEASE NOTE:** Classified ads in Tails & Tassels are free and uncensored. You should always be careful when making any transactions, and should not assume that an advertisement here is an implied approval of any products or buyers.

And now for something truly different, something sure to beat the “cold winter and bad economy blues” -

SPELT POUND CAKE - THIS IS THE REAL THING!

- 1 cup butter (homemade is best, from your own milk, of course)
- 3 cups organic sugar
- 6 eggs (from your chickens, of course)
- 1 ½ cup spelt or whole wheat flour, grown in New York
- 1 ½ cup Frederick soft white flour, grown in New York
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- ¼ salt
- 8 oz sour cream, (homemade is best)
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp almond or orange extract

Cream butter and sugar well. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Mix flour with salt and soda, add to wet ingredients, alternating with sour cream. Mix thoroughly. Blend in flavorings. Bake in greased and floured bundt or tube pan for 1 hour & 15 minutes at 325 degrees. Chill, slice and serve with lightly sugared sliced peaches or other fresh fruit. Cuddle up with someone special, a good cup of tea, . . . or maybe just come to the February 10 NYCO meeting and enjoy a slice with your friends!

