



LAKEVIEW ORGANIC GRAIN  
Box 361, 119 Hamilton Place, Penn Yan, NY 14527  
315-531-1038 www.lakevieworganicgrain.com

## a ❄️ **EARLY WINTER 2009 DAIRY NEWSLETTER** ❄️ a

**WHAT ARE ORGANIC GRAIN PRICES DOING?** The short answer is - organic grain prices are about 25% down from where they were a year ago. Here at Lakeview, on average, organic mixed feed prices currently are about \$50/T less than October 2008. As corn and soybean harvest begins, we will be lowering our prices on those commodities more - starting **Monday, Nov 23**, our grain prices will go down again. Then, feed prices should hold steady, based on the quantity of new-crop grains we will have in storage.

**WOW - they've done it again!** Kate Mendenhall, Bethany Wallis, and the good folks at NOFA-NY have just released a truly amazing book entitled '**The Organic Dairy Handbook**'. Drawing from the extensive expertise of Sarah Flack (pasture management), Linda Tikofsky DVM (health care), Robert Perry (certification), Karen Hoffman (dairy nutrition), Elizabeth Dyck (crop management), Ed Maltby (milk marketing) and others, with honest enlightening case histories spotlighting some of our most experienced New York organic dairy farmers, they have developed a truly exceptional and useful resource, carefully designed to meet the needs and answer the questions of new and existing organic dairy farmers. **BUT WAIT - please don't rush out and buy it!** If you are a regular Lakeview dairy feed customer (having purchased at least 10T in the past 3 months), you will be receiving a FREE copy from us by Christmas. This is our way of saying a **BIG THANK YOU!** for your support of Lakeview this year. Rather than just another pen or calendar, we believe this excellent book will have solid and lasting value that really will help on your farm. For those who are NOT current feed customers, or if you want an extra copy to share with friends, we (and NOFA-NY) will have additional copies for sale. **Happy holidays, thank you, and enjoy!**

**A DAY IN THE LIFE (at Lakeview)** - At Lakeview, we enjoy working with many dairy nutritionists and companies who provide effective valuable nutritional information, products and support to 'our' dairy farmers. These companies include Fertrell, Crystal Creek, AgriKing, AgriDynamics, AgriBasics, Land O Lakes, Mercer Milling, Renaissance and others. One of the most enjoyable parts of our job is being able to learn from these 'experts' so that hopefully we can serve you and your cows better.

The following guest article developed out of a recent conversation between John Kelley of the Old Mill of Troy, PA and Mary-Howell about preparing dairy cows for fall/winter changes. Lakeview will soon be carrying the products mentioned which have been approved by NOFA-NY for use on their certified farms, but as always, you should check with your own certifier before using ANY product. This guest article is the first of several highlighting some of the interesting people in our own professional support network, the people we go to when we have questions (which is frequently!).

### **Fall Feeding Tips to Keep Cows Healthy and Productive**

*A conversation with John Kelley (of The Old Mill, Troy PA)*

Fall is a very busy time on a dairy farm. With all the work going on, one must remember that the cows are faced with some predictable seasonal issues that, unless addressed now, can affect herd performance all winter.

**Shifting to Stored Feeds:** changing from pasture to stored forages presents certain challenges. Since no two growing seasons are exactly the same, it is sometimes difficult to predict how the cows will respond to a new source of stored forage. Take forage samples when you start a new source (bag, mow, silo etc) or when quality changes, and if possible, work with a trusted nutritionist who can advise how to best supplement your forages with grain and minerals under your farm's unique conditions. Try to introduce new types of feed slowly before the old feeds run out, especially if there are large nutritional quality differences. If possible, never feed raw silage to the cows - wait at least 21 to 30 days for fermentation to complete. One way to insure rapid, complete silage fermentation is to use an organically approved silage inoculant. The first couple weeks' worth of new feed coming out of a silo, bag, or bunker can be problematic. Often the last silage into storage was harvested past-prime, may not be packed sufficiently, and may not have fermented well. This can cause two major problems - rumen upset and the risk of moldy feed. To prevent rumen upset and to encourage good rumen health, have sodium bicarbonate in the grain mix, and consider feeding a yeast culture, such as OMRI-listed Diamond V XP Green, especially during periods of stress, or when a new feed is being introduced.

**Mycotoxins in the feed:** Unfortunately, the 2009 growing season has been very favorable for Fusarium mold growth (vomatoxin, DON) in crops. These toxins are produced in cool, wet growing seasons in both forage (especially baleage) and grain, and in poorly fermented silages such as during the first couple weeks of feeding from a new bag. Classic vomatoxin symptoms include a general immune system depression, elevated cell count, scours, unthriftiness, and decline in milk production, weight loss, and increased susceptibility to other problems. The problem with mycotoxins is, of course, that many other things cause similar symptoms. Because of this, and because testing all your feed is not practical, the prudent choice may be to feed a good broad-spectrum toxin binder for insurance, at least through the transition of old to new feed this fall. There are several good toxin binder feed supplements approved for organic farmers - so if you are using questionable feed, you may want to consider using one that offers broad spectrum coverage against Fusarium-based toxins. Even in these tough times, using visibly moldy feed is never a good idea, but unfortunately not all feeds containing mold toxin appear noticeably spoiled, so some nutritional protection may make an important difference in cattle health.

**Winter Dysentery:** When the cows come inside for the winter, dairy farmers should be alert to winter dysentery. This disease is an acute, highly contagious GI tract disorder that commonly affects adult, housed dairy cattle in the fall to early winter with the main symptom being explosive diarrhea, sometimes with blood. Winter dysentery usually takes about a week to travel through the herd. Death loss is rare, but it still can result in a 25 to 95% reduction in milk production, and can take some cows all winter to fully recover. At on-set, taking immediate action may reduce the impact of this condition. Cattle suffering from diarrhea get dehydrated, so keep plenty of clean water available at all times, along with free-choice salt and bicarb. At first signs of an outbreak, start feeding a high quality, single source glucomannan product to the whole herd to slow the rate of infection by binding harmful pathogens in the GI tract. "Single source" means a specific, single strain of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* was fermented to produce the product, thus offering consistent, predictable results. Look for a product with at least 50% beta-glucans and 40% mannanoligosaccharides such as ImmunoWall. This is a non-GMO, research proven, field-tested, and organically approved product, now available through Lakeview.

In summary, a few slight changes in the ration and the investment of a few pennies per day for the next 60 to 90 days may be the way to keep your cows healthy, and productive into a more profitable new year.

*John Kelley is a 30 year veteran of the livestock industry and a member of The Old Mill-Troy, Inc. sales team, supporting feed mills serving the dairy farmers in Western New York, Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio.*



Mark your calendars for the NYCO (New York Certified Organic) meetings for this winter season at the Experiment Station in Geneva on **December 10, January 12, February 9, and March 10.**

The **December 10** meeting will focus on "What's new in organic grain and dairy research" and will feature speakers from Cornell University and Alfred State faculty and Cooperative Extension. The meeting will be connected by video link to several other sites around New York, with participation available in Geneva, Ithaca, Canton and Oriskany. Speakers will include Dr. Chuck Mohler on his excellent weed control research; Dr. Linda Tikofsky of Cornell Quality Milk on herd management practices and cattle health; Dr. Brian Baker, formerly of Research Director of OMRI and now the new director of Alfred State College Sustainable Ag Program; and Stephen Canner and Fay Benson of Cornell Cooperative

Extension on their trials using brassicas for forage, and vinegar as a weed suppressant.

The second meeting, on **January 12**, will specifically focus on organic dairy issues. Jason Karzes of Cornell University will speak on assessing organic dairy profitability and cost of production in changing economic times. Other speakers and farmers will address issues and opportunities facing New York organic dairy farmers, with plenty of time to share your ideas and questions. In the afternoon, we will hold our ever-popular annual discussion "What do New York organic grain farmers need to know from New York organic dairy farmers?" to facilitate the sharing of concerns, information and markets. With all the uncertainty in the organic milk market today, communication and cooperation are especially important. In the back of the room will be (free) space available for vendors, nutritionists, milk companies, and other dairy support folk to visit with farmers one-on-one during lunch, so please invite your favorite dairy support people to participate.

The meeting on **February 9**, entitled "What's new in organic grain and crop production" will particularly focus on seed issues, with Cornell faculty and NY Ag and Markets staff discussing seed quality. Again, organic seed vendors and grain buyers are invited to join us to visit one-on-one with farmers during lunch. And we're still planning the **March 10** meeting, but it will focus on marketing, especially opportunities in direct marketing of food-grade grains and dairy products to consumers. We will hear of exciting developments in marketing locally-branded organic grain, flour, and dairy products direct to consumers.

New York Certified Organic is a group of organic grain and dairy farmers who have been meeting together for over 15 years and now are working with Cooperative Extension and Cornell to expand our abilities and focus. NYCO meetings are always packed with an incredible amount of information and farmer-to-farmer expertise on organic weed control, soil fertility management, pest control, crop and dairy production, alternative crops, marketing and pricing, machinery and grain storage. Long-time organic farmers, recent converts, and conventional farmers 'testing the organic waters' freely share their information, experience and advice. Each meeting features a delicious dish-to-share lunch for a valuable hour of conversation, friendship, networking and great food. NYCO also produces a newsletter, Tails and Tassels, which is available for free by email or for a small charge by postal mail. If you would like more information contact Mary-Howell Martens at 315-531-1038 or [kandmhfarm@sprintmail.com](mailto:kandmhfarm@sprintmail.com) or Fay Benson at 607-898-4665

### ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖ **As winter comes** ❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

...there are interesting challenges for timely feed deliveries at Lakeview! Having several reliable trucks, skilled truck drivers, and some flexibility in our delivery schedule usually makes regular feed deliveries work, but we do need to ask for cooperation from you on several important items -

1. As always, please call your feed order in by Friday afternoon or Monday morning of the week you will need feed. We usually spend Monday afternoon scheduling the week's deliveries, trying to fill the trucks with geographically-logical stops, so it really helps to know of all the week's possible deliveries by that time, and also to be able to work with you to build in some flexibility in actual timing of delivery in case there is bad weather in your area. We make your feed to your specifications, the day before we deliver it.
2. Please have your driveway adequately plowed and cleared of snow and ice before the feed truck comes. Our drivers are highly skilled and usually are able to negotiate most driveways, but when there is significant snow or ice near the feed bins, or when driveways are uneven and inadequately plowed, or when ditches and other hazards are not apparent because of snow, this is

dangerous for our trucks, our drivers, and your feed. If our trucks do get stuck in your driveway, we appreciate your willingness to help them get pulled out.

3. We carry extra pipe on the feed trucks during the winter, knowing that we may not be able to drive as close to the bins as we would like. Please understand that for biosecurity and cleanliness reasons, the feed pipe MUST NOT be laid through muddy or manure-covered areas, nor should our truck be expected to park in nor our driver to walk through such areas. If our truck drivers feel yard areas need to be cleaned up better to insure feed integrity and biosecurity, they will take digital pictures to document the problem areas and we will discuss with you how things can be improved before the next delivery.
4. Please remember that all feed must be paid in full within 20 days of delivery. We really can not afford to extend credit to any of our customers beyond 20 days. We place high priority on paying our suppliers quickly because we know that for the most part, we are all farmers with lots of bills to pay.

**As always, on behalf of all of us at Lakeview -**

Klaas, Mary-Howell, Daniel, Lester, Kent, Sheila, Ed, Stewart, Dan and Jack

We thank you for your continued support and business.

The success of YOUR farm is very important to us – please let us know how we can serve you better!

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