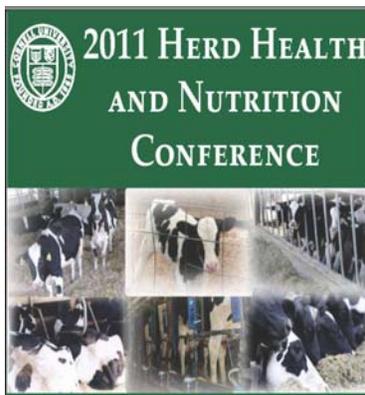


March 2011

Alliance / Pro-Dairy Nutrition Conferences Big Success



The first partnership between the Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance and Cornell Pro-dairy provided educational opportunities to 380 producers, veterinarians, students and industry representatives in Syracuse, NY and West Lebanon, NH in early March. The Syracuse conference was two day affair featuring eight speakers. In West Lebanon the conference ran for one day with a sub-set of the full speaker list.

Partnering with Pro-dairy provided the opportunity for the Alliance to work with one of the premier dairy education programs in the country. The Alliance and Pro-dairy benefitted from shared resources and advertising in providing participants access to some of the best speakers in dairy nutrition and animal health.

Conference Topics & Speakers:

Animal Welfare Issues and Lameness	Jan Shearer
Integration of Calf Management and Disease Issues on Farms	Daryl Nydam
Strategies for Reproductive Success	Jose Santos
NYSCHAP Animal Welfare Certification Overview and Producer Panel	Kathy Finnerty
Milk Components - Integrating Nutrition and Management	Bill Stone
Keeping SCC Below 400,000	Leo Timms
Early Life Nutrition and Impacts on Future Performance	Mike Van Amburgh
Heat Stress Management - Practical Aspects and On-Farm Implementation	Tom Bailey

All of the presentations from the speakers can be downloaded from the Alliance web site at:

<http://www.northeastalliance.com/2011nutrition/powerpoint2011.html>



NY State Legislature Restores Funding for Pro-Dairy



*Thanks to Senators Pattie Ritchie and Cathy Young (center photo)
Pro-Dairy Funds have been restored in the NYS State Budget*

The NYS Assembly and Senate announced that Pro-Dairy will receive funding from the FY 2011-12 State Budget.



Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Patty Ritchie and Assembly Agriculture Committee Chair Bill Magee participated in the joint announcement to restore funding to numerous agricultural programs. Feed Alliance members met with the Chairs and representatives from both Agriculture Committees during our Annual Meeting in early February.

Feed Alliance President Art Whitman praised the leadership of both Agriculture Committee chairs

along with Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver and Senate Majority Leader Dean Skelos. "The Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance is very pleased with the leadership demonstrated by both NY legislatures and Governor Cuomo in arriving at an agreement to restore the critical funding to many agriculture programs, including Pro-Dairy", stated Whitman. "Our dairy industry will be stronger as a result of their leadership"



The Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance signed onto a letter drafted by the Northeast Dairy Producers Association that was delivered to State legislators and called on them to restore state support for Pro-Dairy. A copy of this letter can be found on the Feed Alliance's website www.northeastalliance.com/jointletter.pdf. Feed Alliance Executive Director Rick Zimmerman joined Pro-Dairy Director Tom Overton and dairy farmers Carrie Adams (Ontario County) and George Allen (Washington County) in a series of legislative meetings advocating for the Pro-Dairy Program.

In addition to funding Pro-Dairy, legislative leaders restored funding to several other critical agricultural programs including the New York Farm Viability Institute, Integrated Pest Management, FarmNet, North Country Agriculture Development Program, Agriculture in the Classroom, Maple Producers Association and Tractor Rollover Protection Assistance.

Final budget bills will be printed and acted on in both houses, then forwarded to Governor Cuomo for his approval. Legislative leaders have stated that the NYS budget will be finished on time by April 1st, despite the fact that significant issues such as school aid have yet to be settled.

Animal Rights Activists Target Massachusetts Farms

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is increasingly active in Massachusetts. Last legislative session they filed a bill that would have banned certain forms of animal agriculture – battery caged egg operations, veal crates, and gestation crates for sows. In press releases and blogs, HSUS and their supporters typically refer to such farms as “Factory Farms”. The bill died in Committee, but it has been refiled. This time HSUS appears to be putting more of a push behind the bill. They have hired a Massachusetts coordinator, are doing lobbying trainings for supporters, and are organizing a lobby day at the Statehouse. It’s clear they are putting a renewed emphasis on this issue in Massachusetts.

The odd thing is that Massachusetts only has a half dozen or so operations that would be impacted if this bill became law. There are no crated veal operations and only a handful of farms using gestation crates or battery cages. Even then, none of these are large farms. All of the egg operations together wouldn’t have a fraction of the number of birds to be found on a single floor of a large egg operation in the Midwest.

To make things even odder, HSUS rates Massachusetts as tied for third place in their ranking of state’s animal protection laws. Through their own measurement, Massachusetts is already way ahead of most of the country in animal welfare. It begs the question then, why the big emphasis by HSUS in Massachusetts? The most logical theory is that Massachusetts is a state ripe for fundraising. The state’s population is largely urban and suburban and agriculture is not a major employer. There are a lot of pet owners who are susceptible to the type of emotional campaign for which HSUS is known. In short, Massachusetts citizens are an easy target for HSUS. Their campaigns on various bills and issues are always accompanied by fundraising pleas which by all accounts are wildly successful. HSUS reportedly has \$200 million in assets.



The Alliance is partnering with Massachusetts Farm Bureau in opposition to the bill. Two major arguments with the HSUS bill include:

- It’s unfair to target these farming operations. The systems they have in place were state of the art ten years ago and recommended by USDA and Extension Services. Many can’t afford new systems. Closing them would create a hardship for these families and their employees. It would also hinder the local food system, causing many buyers to purchase eggs and pork from out-of-state - more likely than not from larger operations that also employ battery cages and gestation crates.
- It is unlikely HSUS will draw the line with this proposed legislation. While they are targeting these ag practices today, if they get what they want today, tomorrow they will be pushing for bans on practices that more common in Massachusetts, and which many more farms rely on in order to remain sustainable. After HSUS was successful in banning hen cages where the hens’ free movement was limited, one farmer spent \$3.2 million on an “enriched cage system” that allowed birds to move freely. The HSUS’s response? Unacceptable – only cage free is acceptable.

-Compiled from the MA Farm Bureau Newsletter, March 2011

Alliance Partners with Green Mountain Dairy Federation for Legislative Reception

On Wednesday, February 23 the Alliance hosted a dairy industry reception, in conjunction with the Vermont based Green Mountain Dairy Federation, at the state capital in Montpelier, Vermont. Nearly 200 legislators, farmers, and dairy industry representatives met in the Cedar Creek Room for refreshments and an opportunity to discuss current issues of concern to dairy business owners.

Stuart Hall and Mike Tetreault of the Ag and Feed Alliance board attended as well as Louise Calderwood, Director of Government Relations. Many in attendance took the opportunity to discuss proposed legislation, particularly related to environmental quality, and its potential impact on farming and retail businesses such as feed dealers and manufacturers.

FDA Plans Hearing to Discuss the Safety of Imported Animal Feed, Starts Implementation of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) published a notice in the Federal Register seeking comments on verification of imported facilities and announcing a series of public hearings. The first public meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 29 to discuss Title III of the Food Safety Modernization Act covering importer verification, the Voluntary Qualified Importer Program, import certifications for food, and third-party accreditation. This meeting will also be freely webcast, but advance registration is required. Registration Webcast information can be accessed at:

<https://www.fedmeetings.net/common/registration.cfm?mid=3671%20>



The second set of public meetings will occur on Wednesday, March 30 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Thursday, March 31 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition in College Park, Md. The day and a half meeting will look at “Ensuring the Safety of Imported Foods and Animal Feed: Comparability of Food Safety Systems and Import Practices of Foreign Countries.” This meeting will not be available via webcast. There will be an opportunity for public comments and written comments will be accepted

until April 29, 2011. AFIA will be in attendance at these hearings and the NE Ag and Feed Alliance will provide updates to our membership.

Massachusetts Agriculture “Day at the State House” Agenda

Please notify Louise Calderwood if you plan to attend so we can coordinate with Brad Mitchell of MA Farm Bureau - rcalderwod@aol.com (note, only one “o”)

Thursday, April 7, 2011

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|-------------|---|
| 8:30-11:30 | Exhibitor Set-Up in the Great Hall and Nurse’s Hall |
| 9:30 | Food Set Up |
| 10:00-11:30 | Farmer’s Orientation with Farm Bureau in Nurse’s Hall |
| 11:30-12:00 | Speaking Program |
| 12:00 | “Taste of Massachusetts” Reception in the Great Hall and Nurse’s Hall |

Lawsuits Against Dean Foods Expand to Other Regions

Attorneys representing Northeast dairy farmers in a class-action antitrust lawsuit against Dairy Farmers America (DFA) and Dairy Marketing Services (DMS) filed motions in the U.S. District Court for the District of Vermont, seeking to unseal case records and asking for approval to send out notices providing dairy farmers with details of a settlement with Dean Foods Co., the other defendant in the case.

Based on terms of the proposed settlement, announced early last December, Dean agreed to pay \$30 million into a fund for dairy farmers, and buy up to 60 million lbs. of milk per month for a period of 30 months, for three plants – one in New York, and two in Massachusetts – from sources other than DFA and DMS.

In mid February dairy farmers in Kentucky, Southern Indiana and throughout the Southeast also developed a lawsuit against Dean Foods and others, hoping to prove what they believe is a conspiracy to pay farmers less for milk. The farmers contend that Dean and cooperatives that are the major buyers of their product worked together to keep prices artificially low, in part by buying bottling plants and thereby limiting competition. Farmers engaged in the suit, to be tried in June in Greeneville, Tenn., hope it will produce a more competitive marketplace with better prices.



Dean officials said recently that the company views the Southeastern case as separate from the ongoing Northeastern case. Dean spokesman Jamaison Schuler said. "We believe farmers have many outlets for their raw milk at competitive prices. We are confident an objective review of the facts will reveal competition is alive and flourishing in the dairy industry." While Dean has settled the Northeastern case, Schuler said no settlements have been reached in the Southern suits because they have different facts, issues and defendants.

These cases are two of several claims being made across the country against Dean. The U.S. Justice Department and the attorneys general of Wisconsin, Michigan and Illinois also have filed a federal lawsuit claiming that Dean's purchase of regional milk plants violated antitrust laws.

Objections to the proposed Northeast settlement were filed on January 18 by about two dozen individual dairy farmers and DFA/DMS. U.S. District Court Judge Christina Reiss has not given preliminary approval to the settlement. In its latest filings, the plaintiffs allege DFA and DMS are misinforming dairy farmers about the merits of the case – while also restricting access to relevant documentation on the basis of a protective order entered in the case. According to Benjamin Brown, plaintiffs' attorney at Cohen Milstein Sellers & Toll PLLC, once preliminary approval is granted and settlement notices are provided, Northeast dairy farmers covered in the suit could be eligible to file a claim for monetary damages.

-Compiled from the Hall, Louisville Courier-Journal, 2/15/2011 and from Dairy Profit Weekly, March 14, 2011

NEAFA Calendar Of Events

Grain Journal Webinar

April 6, 2011

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm (FREE)

“Complying with the New Food/Feed Safety Law – A Guide for the Grain, Feed and Pet Food Industries”

“Golf for Good Works” Annual Tournament

June 24, 2011

Turning Stone Casino Resort
Verona, New York

Cornell Dairy Executive Program

December 4-8, 2011

The Statler Hotel & Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

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