

Annual Meeting Special Edition

Tea Party A Success!

The 84th Annual Tea Party, held at the Copley Place Marriott in Boston MA on February 9 and 10 was an outstanding success with over 187 registrants attending the many educational offerings and social gatherings.

The event opened on Monday with a presentation by Dr. Tom Overton, Assistant Director, ProDairy Program & Mr. Karl Czymmek, ProDairy Specialist in Agronomy/Nutrient Management at Cornell University. The information provided insight into the complexity of CAFO compliance on dairy farms along with an update of the many programs and services provided by the ProDairy Program. Overton and Czymmek also shared insight on research demonstrating the reduced overall environmental impact by today's dairy herds. The evidence points to a net decrease in dairy farming's overall carbon footprint due to many factors including the latest feeding and management technologies and the use of rbST.

On Tuesday proceedings got underway with the Alliance Annual Meeting (see the story later in this issue), followed by a series of outstanding presentations. Joel Newman of AFIA opened the session with an outlook on challenges and opportunities for the feed industry including consolidation, alliances, globalization, and immigration policy. Joel recognized challenges ahead for agriculture from increased regulation, consumer advocacy groups, and a near term decrease in production due to the global economy. However, he also sees the opportunity for US food production to lead the nation out of the recession as the international market for US agricultural products continues to increase.

Dr. Mark Stephenson of Cornell University provided insight into the market price swings experienced by the dairy industry over the past 20 years. Currently the impact of increased input costs, reduced domestic utilization, and softened export demand have combined forces to provide significant challenges to dairy farmers. Stephenson remarked that increased quotas and subsidies in the EU, coupled with a strengthening US dollar could extend the current downturn in prices. Stephenson forecasted 2009 farm milk prices for Northeast dairy farmers to average about \$13.95 per cwt.

Bob Gray offered his expert perspective on the new administration and the 111th Congress, echoing many of the themes laid out earlier in the day by Joel Newman. Gray also provided details on the Northeast Initiatives Proposal, a combined effort between dairy cooperatives, state departments of agriculture and land grant universities to address milk pricing stabilization, farm financing programs, dairy processing infrastructure, risk management options, and development of export markets.

The Tuesday morning session wrapped up with Kay Johnson Smith of the Animal Agriculture Alliance reviewing animal agriculture in the U.S.: *Policy Trends & Their Implications*. Smith provided examples of animal rights activists, led by the Humane Society of the United States, moving beyond their historic calls for vegan diets to banning or limiting new farms or expansions, pushing for animal guardian initiatives (gaining rights for animals), and banning sales and consumption of certain animal based food products.

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During the Alliance Luncheon Dr. Larry Chase of Cornell University was presented the Distinguished Service Award for his years of service to Northeast agriculture. Dr. Charlie Sniffen and President John Mitchell presented Larry with a plaque and thanked him for his on-going commitment to producers and the allied industry. Patrick Nearing of Cochecton Mills and David Traub of The Old Mill-Troy were recognized and thanked for their years of service on the Alliance Board of Directors. Chances are we will tap Pat and Dave's talents again in the future!

The Tea Party wrapped up with the Annual Banquet and featured Trent Loos, a rancher, and advocate of agriculture. In a presentation peppered with humor and poignancy Loos spoke to the importance of communicating to consumers the benefits of our food production system and the safe, abundant, affordable sustenance we all too often take for granted. Loos stated that in his interviews and professional speaking engagements, he's seeing a new sense of urgency among farmers and producers trying to convince both policymakers and the public that a viable system of agriculture is vital to America's security and well-being.

Dr. Mark Stephenson explaining milk prices ...



Thank you to retiring Board member Patrick Nearing for a job well done!



Kay Johnson Smith, Animal Agriculture Alliance



Bob Gray, Washington Advocate for Agriculture



Dr. Larry Chase, recipient of the Distinguished Service Award.



Excellent Networking!



AFIA President Joel Newman

Excellent Socializing!



*Cast of Characters!
Executive Director Rick Zimmerman,
Keynote Speaker Trent Loos and
President John Mitchell*

Alliance Annual Meeting Held in Boston

The Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance held its annual meeting on February 10, in conjunction with the 84th Annual Boston Tea Party. President John Mitchell greeted members followed by a summary of the year's activities from Executive Director, Rick Zimmerman. Louise Calderwood, Government Relations Director delivered an update of government relations activities for the past year including outreach to legislators and regulatory officials, throughout the northeast.

The Nominating Committee's recommendation of Jeff Durkin of Cornerstone Nutrition, Stuart Hall of Feed Commodities International, Peter Karnezos of the Old Mill-Troy and Marc West of the Paris Farmers Union, to fill four open Board seats, was unanimously accepted. Look for introductions from Jeff, Peter and Marc in next month's newsletter. The Alliance continues under the leadership of John Mitchell as President and the slate of officers is unchanged.



2009 NEAFA OFFICERS

President:	John Mitchell, <i>Blue Seal Richer Dairy Nutrition</i>
First Vice President:	Art Whitman, <i>Whitman's Feed Store</i>
Second Vice President:	Rob Sheffer, <i>Cargill Animal Nutrition</i>
Secretary:	Richard Casler, <i>Feed Ingredient Trading Corp.</i>
Treasurer:	Al Ames, <i>NutriLinx, LLC</i>
Immediate Past President:	Randy Schwalke, <i>Agri-Capital Advisors</i>
Executive Director:	Rick Zimmerman
Director of Government Relations:	Louise Calderwood

2009 NEAFA DIRECTORS

Mark Anderson, <i>Diamond V Mills</i>	Barry Baetz, <i>Shur-Gain USA</i>
William Colten, <i>Mercer Milling Company</i>	Kevin Crane, <i>Harbor Point Minerals</i>
Jeff Durkin, <i>Cornerstone Nutrition</i>	Doug Galliford, <i>Land O'Lakes Purina Feed</i>
Dr. Rick Grant, <i>Miner Institute</i>	Stuart Hall, <i>Feed Commodities International</i>
Peter Karnezos – <i>Old Mill Troy</i>	Robert Mattison, <i>Gramco, Inc.</i>
Mike Tetreault, <i>Poulin Grain, Inc.</i>	Marc West, <i>Paris Farmers Union</i>

Mitchell in Albany to push back on Tonnage Tax**New York. Feed Manufacturers Encouraged to Call and Write State Lawmakers**

John Mitchell and Rick Zimmerman joined forces to lobby against the proposed tonnage tax increase that is included in Governor Paterson's budget unveiled earlier this year. The 2009-10 state budget would double the tax from 5 cents to 10 cents per ton of feed manufactured or distributed in New York. In addition, the small mill tax exemption (100 tons or less per year) would be eliminated.

Mitchell told law makers that feed manufacturers are faced with substantial challenges in doing business in New York. This tax will be an added burden onto the backs of feed manufacturers, increasing the difficulty of remaining competitive within this multi-state industry. For some of our larger feed manufacturing companies this tax increase will double their current tax liability by \$12,000 to over \$20,000 per year.

New York feed manufacturers are strongly encouraged to call and write their state lawmakers to voice opposition to the tonnage tax increase. Go to: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/ils/legislature/legis.html> and find your state legislator's name, address and phone number. Written letters have the most impact, but calls and emails work too. Check out the tonnage tax position paper on our website for guidance in writing your letter. Please contact Rick Zimmerman for further guidance.

Randy Schwalke Joins AgriCapital Advisors

Randy Schwalke, past president of the Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance and a veteran animal feed industry executive with over 35 years experience, has joined AgriCapital Advisors, AgriCapital's team of executives and professionals, to compliment its New York investment banking team.

Randy will provide advice, support and implementation services related to AgriCapital's investment banking assignments within the feed, pet food and related industries. Randy is the founder and owner of FEED MARKETING, LLC, an executive services provider to the feed and pet food industries. Prior to founding FEED MARKETING, Randy was the president of Blue Seal Feeds, Inc., a subsidiary of Muscatine Foods Corporation.



Safe Feed/Safe Food Webinar Scheduled by AFIA for March 26

Members and nonmembers encouraged to participate

The American Feed Industry Association has scheduled a webinar to provide information and answer questions about its Safe Feed/Safe Food Certification Program for the afternoon of March 26, 2009. The goal of the webinar is to encourage more facilities to consider becoming certified.

AFIA staff members will share details of the program beginning at 2:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Saving Time. The webinar is expected to last about 90 minutes, as it is scheduled to end at 4 p.m.

The webinar will cover the guidelines required for SF/SF certification and provide participants with insights from an SF/SF auditor. Participants also will hear taped remarks by representatives of facilities that already are certified about why they believe the program is valuable. For more information and to register call (703) 524-0810 or click on the following link or visit our website at www.northeastalliance.org

<http://www.afia.org/Afia/Files/2009%20Misc/SFSF%20Webcast%20Description.Reg.pdf>

The cost is \$25, and the fee covers the cost of a CD of the entire broadcast; you may assemble a team at your computer to view the entire webinar for that fee.

Humane Society of the US to Northeast Host Lobby Days: *Contact your legislators now!*

A reoccurring theme of many of the presentations at last month's Tea Party was the increasing role played by consumer groups and animal rights activists in agricultural policy. The responsibility we all share in having our voice heard was brought to life by Trent Loos, keynote speaker at the Tea Party Annual Banquet, as he told stories of the disconnect between a safe, plentiful food and modern agricultural practices. The challenge faced by California farms with the passage of Proposition 2, outlawing standard veal raising and hog gestation practices, is creeping closer to the northeast as the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) holds a series of lobby days.

The HSUS is not your local animal shelter, finding homes for abandoned pets, but rather a well funded organization with a single focus to abolish animal use for any purpose including food, sport, or research. The organization has repeatedly demonstrated its unwillingness to assist with development of best practices for animal management, preferring to work toward abolishment of standard animal husbandry practices.

It is essential that your state legislator hears from you and your support for scientifically based approaches to animal care. As the people who feed

America's livestock we share the title of "expert" with farmers who care for these animals everyday. To quote Trent Loos, "It's essential for everyone involved in agriculture to get engaged, to do their part in spreading the message of how efficient our food production system really is. More importantly, we need to talk about how we owe that benefit to modern science and technology."

You can easily find your legislator by visiting your state legislative web page listed below. A simple e-mail that you oppose the position of HSUS on animal agriculture is sufficient. If you would like any assistance in developing a more detailed message feel free to contact Louise at 802-586-2239 or Rick at 888-445-4595.

Maine <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/>

Massachusetts
<http://www.mass.gov/legis/>

New York
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/ils/legislature/legis.html>

Vermont <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/>

Northeast Ag & Feed Alliance

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.northeastalliance.com

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Northeast Ag Alliance Co-hosts Vermont Legislative Reception

The Northeast Ad and Feed Alliance, partnering with the Green Mountain Dairy Federation, hosted a legislative reception in the Montpelier Statehouse cafeteria on February 25th. The event was attended by over 100 people, including VT Governor Jim Douglas and Secretary of Agriculture, Roger Allbee. Alliance Vice President Art Whitman greeted the crowd and spoke to the important interconnection between dairy producers and the network of feed, supply, and service providers.



First Vice President Art Whitman addresses legislators and industry representatives at a Montpelier VT legislative reception hosted by the Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance and the Green Mountain Dairy Federation.

The throng of legislators, dairy producers, and allied dairy industry representatives networked and shared information while enjoying refreshments provided by Monument Farms Milk, Cabot Cheese, Franklin Foods. Earlier in the day Louise Calderwood, Alliance Director for Government Relations, addressed the Green Mountain Dairy Federation Board outlining Alliance activities over the past year.

AFIA Offers Webinar On Preparing For An OSHA Inspection

AFIA is offering its members and interested non-members the opportunity to participate in a webcast on preparing for inspections by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration. The webcast will be held April 15, 2009, 1:30-3:00 p.m. EDST.

Webinar participants will learn what to expect during an OSHA inspection, including the obligations and legislative authority of OSHA and responsibilities of regulated facilities.

Featured speakers include William J. Pfister, president of Safety Training and Consulting, Inc., which provides occupational safety and health training and consulting services throughout the U.S., and Allen L. Quigley, vice president of sales and marketing, Clarion Safety Systems, who has extensive knowledge of the standards and experience in applying the standards to a wide variety of products.

After the broadcast, each registered participant will receive a CD of the webcast. Questions may be submitted by participants before, during or after the webcast. The webcast will be 90 minutes in length, including the question period.

More details and the registration form can be found at www.afia.org. To receive the early-bird rate of \$239 for AFIA members and \$479 for non-members, registration must be received by April 1, 2009. After April 1, the rates increase to \$269 for members and \$509 for non-members.

For questions, contact:

Veronica Pedrotty at vpedrotty@afia.org, (703) 558-3563.

NEAFA Calendar of Events

Dairy Feed & Nutrition Conf.

April 7, 2009

Location: Doubletree Hotel
Syracuse, NY
(Online registration now open!)

Dairy Feed & Nutrition Conf.

April 9, 2009

Fireside Inn
West Lebanon, NH
(Online registration now open!)

Golf for Good Works Annual Golf Tournament

June 25, 2009

Turnington Casino & Resort
Verona, NY