



Understanding Organics

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Keynote Address: **Ethics and Compassion in Organic Dairying** (Lawrence Andres). In an increasingly competitive and profit driven organic marketplace, farmers have to be careful not to lose sight of the very essentials of responsible animal husbandry. The behavioral and management needs of organic dairy cattle will be discussed, as well as the ethics of complementary medicine and animal welfare concerns unique to organic dairying.

History and Basic Principles of Organic Agriculture and the National Organic Program (Jim Riddle). During this session, Jim Riddle, long-time organic inspector and former chair of the USDA National Organic Standards Board, will provide a brief history of organic agriculture and organic regulations in the United States. Mr. Riddle will present the basic principles of organic crop and livestock production, and explain how these principles are codified in the U.S. National Organic Program regulation. The session will close with an interactive discussion, which will provide audience members a chance to ask questions and air concerns.

Allowed, Restricted and Prohibited Materials for Use on Organic Farms—How are they categorized and reviewed? (Brian Baker, PhD). Veterinarians, extension educators and organic producers need to know what fertilizers, pesticides, feed additives, health care products, and other production tools meet National Organic Program (NOP) standards. The NOP rule does not comprehensively list generic materials or brand name products. Knowing what complies requires careful review and evaluation. The Organic Materials Review Institute publishes the *OMRI Generic Materials List* and provides a service to certifiers, producers, handlers, and suppliers of evaluating brand name products for use in organic production and handling. The workshop will describe the basis for determining what materials are allowed under the NOP, and resources that can help determine the status of specific products.

U.S. Perspective of Health Management on Organic Farms and the Philosophy of Organic Farming (Jim Gardiner). Preventive health management on organic farms relies on a systems approach which interweaves soil health, crop health and animal health. This talk will focus on what the US organic farmer needs from his/her veterinarian, extension educator and service consultants to build a successful team.

eOrganic-A New National Extension Service Information Network for Organic Agriculture (Jim Riddle). The Extension Service is creating a nationwide electronic information delivery system, called eXtension. An eOrganic team has formed to develop and deliver comprehensive and accurate information on organic agriculture through all Extension offices. Jim Riddle will provide an overview of this effort and facilitate a discussion to hear how the initiative can best meet the needs of organic and transitional producers.

Agro-Ecology of Livestock Health: The Multi-Prong Approach (Hubert Karreman, VMD). “The Multi-Prong Approach to Livestock Health” will focus on the environment in which the animals live, their interaction with their immediate environment and its impact upon their health. There will be an

emphasis on a multi-prong approach when considering the prevention of disease and in the treatment when disease occurs. Parasitism and lameness will be discussed in this regard.

Animal Welfare and the Organic Dairy (Juan Velez, M.V., M.S., D.A.C.T). This three part presentation will discuss animal welfare and animal welfare audits based on the procedures used by a USDA process verified third party company; a description of the Aurora Organic Dairy herd health protocol; and be a comparison of various herd health parameters pre-organic and post-organic.

Integrated Parasite Management for Ruminant Livestock (Ann Wells, DVM). Parasites are one of the bigger disease concerns for organic livestock producers. While this is true for sheep and goats, it does not have to be true for cattle. Management of the livestock and environment impact the life cycle of strongyles and coccidia. Producers use several different alternative therapies. Are they efficacious? Current research and on farm results will be detailed and discussed.

Healthy Soils Create Healthy Forages (Gary Zimmer). What do you need to change in your soil management to be organic and grow quality forages? What are healthy soils? This workshop is about organic farm management: doing what you can to grow the feed and supplements, rather than purchasing expensive commodities. A practical approach.

Homeopathy in Organic Dairy Practice (Trevor Adams/Sue Miles). Homeopathy and how it can be introduced into organic farms and be used as a management tool to improve the overall health of the farm stock rather than just be used as a form of veterinary treatment. Misconceptions about homeopathy will be challenged. The session will also include a practical exercise in working with a Farm repertory written by Trevor Adams. This is a unique publication and an essential tool for the farmer who wishes to use remedies homeopathically.

Healthy Feeds Create Healthy Livestock (Jerry Brunetti). Raising healthy, productive and reproductive livestock begins with a healthy diet that includes a variety of quality forages grown on good soil. It takes more than the latest pasture mix to create a diverse pasture and this workshop will explore the benefits of plants not commonly considered to be forages, such as dandelion, chicory, plantain, comfrey and plants from the hedgerow. This workshop will also provide participants with a thorough understanding of the soil and plant connection and how mineral nutrition and soil biology contribute to an animal's immune system.

Biologics and Botanicals and Their Use in Livestock Care (Hubert Karreman, VMD). “Biologics and Botanicals: Their Use in Livestock Care” will give a historical perspective of veterinary treatments prior to the advent of synthetic pharmaceuticals as a basis for treating cows on organic farms. Modern literature will be cited as a basis for the continued use of biologics and botanicals with specific treatments I use clinically for many common ailments on dairy farms, including mastitis, calf scours, uterine problems, pneumonia and lameness.

Advanced Homeopathy and the HAWL program in the UK (Trevor Adams/Sue Miles). The current situation of Homeopathy in the UK will be described. They will also present the unique course for farmers that has been established (Homeopathy At Wellie Level - HAWL) to ensure the responsible use of homeopathy on the farm. An overview of how Homeopathy at Wellie Level came about and has developed over the past five years will also be presented, including the ongoing contributions to farm homeopathy practice and research made by our former students

Understanding the Pasture Standards for Livestock and the Basics of Grazing (Sarah Flack). This session will cover the National Organic Program guidelines for access to pasture for ruminant livestock, the proposed pasture guidelines submitted by the National Organic Standards Board, and a basic outline of how NOFA-VT's Dairy and Livestock Technical Assistance Program and VOF (the certifying arm of NOFA-VT) assist their producers in understanding and meeting these pasture requirements. Included in this talk will be some basic tenets to successful grazing systems and how producers are achieving this on their farms in Vermont.

Basic Clinical Trial Design and Considerations for Conducting On-Farm Evaluations of Complementary Therapy (Dr. Ynte Schukken/Dr. Linda Tikofsky). This presentation will describe the basic ideas of evaluation of new therapies for diseases in cows. We will discuss the need for a proper study design, objective outcome measures and basic statistical methods to compare treatments with control groups. The need for randomized clinical studies will be advocated.