



2008 GRAZING WORKSHOP SERIES

NOFA/Mass, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the University of Massachusetts Extension have organized these Grazing Workshops as a continuing education resource for Massachusetts farmers. Topics at each event will vary, but will include pasture management, organic transition and herd health, forage species, soil fertility, fencing and water systems, and summer and winter grazing. See www.nofamass.org/programs/organicdairy/index.php, or www.massgrass.org for updates. All pasture walks will take place from 10:00 - 1:00 (unless otherwise noted). Please bring your own lunch. For more information on any of these sessions, contact Winton Pitcoff, NOFA/Mass, at winton@nofamass.org or 413-634-5728; Steve Herbert, UMass Extension, at 413-545-2250 or sherbert@pssci.umass.edu; or Tom Akin, NRCS, at 413-253-4365 or thomas.akin@ma.usda.gov.

Transitioning a Dairy Herd from Winter to Summer Feed

Tuesday, May 6, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Rocky Acres Farm, Warren, MA, 413-436-5806

Rocky Acres Farm is a grass-based operation consisting of 100 acres of grass hay and 60 acres of pasture. Bob Richardson, who has been operating the farm since 1976 and is the second generation on the farm, practices rotational grazing and seasonal milking. In 2006 the farm was selected as the Massachusetts Outstanding Dairy Farm of the Year by the New England Green Pastures Committee.

Bob will talk about the issues around deciding when and how to move cows from winter to summer feed, as well as selling raw milk. Meghan Moody from Blue Seal Feeds will be on hand to discuss the work she has done with Bob on ration balancing and forage/hay testing.

Directions to 690 Coy Hill Road, Warren, MA:

- From the Massachusetts Turnpike take Palmer exit #8, take right from the turnpike ramp to left onto route 20 to route 67 east through West Warren. Take a left onto Coy Hill Road just before a Sunoco Gas Station. Follow Coy Hill Road straight up the hill 1.25 miles, the farm is on the right.
- From north - take route 32 to Ware, South Street to West Warren, take left onto Route 67, go through lights to left just before Sunoco Gas Station. Go up the hill on Coy Hill Road 1.25 miles, the farm is on the right.
- From south - take route 20 west to Route 19 in Brimfield, a right in Brimfield. Take route 19 to Warren, take left under railroad underpass in Warren center, take left onto route 67 to Sunoco Gas Station, take right onto Coy Hill Road straight up the hill 1.25 miles, the farm is on the right.
- From Route 9 take Route 67 South through Warren Center to Coy Hill Rd on your right. The Richardson Farm is on your right after a long climb on Coy Hill Rd.

Small Ruminant Management

Wednesday, June 4, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Crystal Brook Farm, Sterling, MA,
978-422-6646

Ann Starbard produces about 12,000 lbs. of fresh goat cheese each year from her herd of 70 alpine and Saanen goats. The goats browse using a rotational system and the farm also raises its own hay. Milking is on a seasonal basis, with all animals freshening in early spring and drying off for the winter. Ann sells her cheese at farmers markets, through CSAs, and through about 25 wholesale accounts.

Topics to be discussed will include mixing browse with pasture, managing parasites, using trace minerals while pasturing, watering systems and fencing.

Directions to 192 Tuttle Road, Sterling, MA:

- From I-190 in central Mass:
- Take Exit 6, Route 12 Sterling, Leominster.
- Take Route 12 South and follow about 1 1/2 miles into Sterling center.
- Turn RIGHT onto Park St in the center of town. This is a short street at the common.
- Turn RIGHT at the church, going up hill on Meeting House Hill Road.
- At the top of the hill, follow the road straight
- The road turns into ROWLEY HILL ROAD. You will go under I-190,
- Take your first RIGHT after the underpass. This is TUTTLE ROAD.
- The farm is 1.7 miles on your LEFT. The goat barn is red with a green roof.

Transitioning to Organic Dairy / NRCS Resources

Saturday, June 21, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Robinson Farm, Hardwick, MA, 413-477-6988

Ray and Pamela Robinson are the fourth generation operating this family farm, and currently provide customers with raw milk and milk/grass fed veal, certified organic eggs, perennials, vegetables and hay. They graze their 40 cow herd on their own organic pasture, using the cows to naturally improve the soil and sustain the land.

The Robinsons are in their final year of transitioning to organic and will discuss this process. They'll also talk about raw milk. The Robinsons have worked with the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on grazing plans and infrastructure planning, and a representative from NRCS will be on hand to discuss the agency's resource inventory services, conservation plan maps, and other services available.

Directions to 42 Jackson Road, Hardwick, MA:

- From I-90/Mass Turnpike:
- Take Exit 8 Ware/Palmer left for Rt-32 N into Ware Center, right onto 9&32, left onto Rte.32 again to Gilbertville, then up hill to onto 32A N to Hardwick Center
- Stay North on 32A toward Petersham, past Butler's gas and the Hardwick Town Garages.
- Take a right after the cemetery onto North Road. Go just under one mile and turn left onto Jackson Road. The farm is on the corner.

Organic Dairy Transition

Thursday, July 10, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Colrain Dairy Farm, Colrain, MA, 413-624-3978

Larry Shearer has been intensively grazing his dairy cows since 1983, and milking seasonally since 1991. In August 2007 he completed a two-year transition process, and began shipping milk to Organic Valley.

Discussion at this event will focus on the process of transitioning to organic dairy, herd health, and infrastructure issues such as fencing, watering, and pasture management. Participants will also be able to see Larry's direct cut silage equipment and vacuum manure spreader.

Directions to 270 Greenfield Road, Colrain, MA:

- From I-91 N, take exit 26 for Route 2 W, Greenfield
- Follow the rotary to Route 2 West
- After 4 miles turn right on Colrain Shelburne Rd.
- Stay on this road as it turns into Greenfield Rd.
- The farm is 3 miles from Route 2, on the right.

Raising and Marketing Grass-Fed Meat

Thursday, July 24, 10:00 p.m.– 1:00 p.m.

Wheel-View Farm, Shelburne, MA, 413-625-2900

Wheel-View Farm in Shelburne is a family owned scenic hilltop farm in western Massachusetts raising USDA certified natural grass-fed beef and breeding stock from a primarily Belted Galloway herd. The beef is sold from the farm's store and to local restaurants. John and Carolyn Wheeler became the fourth generation of Carolyn's family to operate the farm in 1979, running the dairy until 1988 before transitioning to a hay operation and eventually moving to beef.

Discussions during this session will include rotational grazing, fencing and watering systems, haying, the use of Mass Farm Viability Program grants and more. Jessica Cook from Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) will discuss and answer questions about plans for a new slaughterhouse in Western Massachusetts. Rick Chandler from the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources will also attend to answer questions about business planning for farm-based businesses and provide information about MDAR resources available to farmers.

Directions to 212 Reynolds Road, Shelburne, MA:

- Route 91 North from Springfield (91 South if coming from the east on Route 2).
- Get off at the Greenfield exit (Exit # 26).
- Go around traffic circle and take Route 2 West toward North Adams.
- Go approximately 5 1/2 miles west on Route 2 and then take a right on to Little Mohawk Road.
- Go approximately 3 miles on Little Mohawk Road and then take a left on to Reynolds Road. The farm is 1/4 mile ahead.

Small Scale Dairies and Alternative Forages

August 18, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Bostrom Farm, Greenfield, MA, 413-772-3732

Kyle Bostrom grazes 12 cows on 20 acres in Greenfield and has been experimenting with growing small quantities of alternative forages – corn and Japanese Millet, as well as winter Rye. He is certified to sell raw milk, and also sells beef, vegetables and eggs from the farm.

Karen Hoffman Sullivan, an Animal Scientist for the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service, will also attend. Karen works with dairy and beef farmers across New York State who rotationally graze their animals, providing advice on feeding management to these farmers to help them keep their costs of production low. She has worked extensively with the NOFA-NY Organic Dairy Transitions Project.

Directions to 95 Green River Road, Greenfield, MA:

- From I-91 N, take exit 26 for Route 2 W, Greenfield
- Follow the rotary to Route 2 West
- Take first right on Colrain Rd.
- After 3 miles, follow Green River Rd. to the right

Infrastructure on Mixed-Livestock Farms

Tuesday, September 9, 10:00 a.m.– 1:00 p.m.

Tufts University Farm, North Grafton, MA, 508-887-4945

Tufts University farm is home to a variety of livestock, including beef and dairy cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry. The farm uses intensive rotational grazing methods and also raises its own hay and silage corn. The farm is also home to the Azuluna project, which has developed protocols for farmers to raise veal, pork, lamb and eggs exclusively on grass, and then connects them with markets for these products.

Topics discussed will include no-till seeding, use of direct-injection liquid manure, compost, herd health, biosecurity and fencing types.

Directions to Tufts University Farm, North Grafton, MA:

- Take the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90) east to Exit 11, Millbury.
- Go right onto Route 122 for approximately 2 miles.
- Take a left onto Bridge Street. At stop sign, make a left onto Route 140.
- Turn right onto Route 30 and travel about 2 miles.
- Turn right on Wildlife Drive
- Turn left on Service Rd.
- Turn right on Nickerson Lane and look for the sheep barn/farm machinery building on your right.

UMass Pasture Management Research

Wednesday, September 17, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

UMass Research and Education Center Farm, Deerfield, 413-545-2250

The University of Massachusetts with funding from USDA-SARE and Mass. DAR has initiated research on evaluation of pasture blends and mixes, intensification of grazing, alternatives for summer grazing and extending grazing later into the fall. These and other related topics will be discussed at the research site with University of Massachusetts faculty and staff.

The UMass Research and Education Center Farm is located on River Road in South Deerfield. From Route 116 go north on River Road on the Deerfield side of the bridge crossing the Connecticut River between Deerfield and Sunderland.

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Massachusetts Dept. of Agricultural Resources
University of Massachusetts Amherst Extension*