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Board of Directors:

Dr. Rick Grant
President

518-846-7121
grant@whminer.com

Andy Dugan
Vice President

315-841-4167
adugan@goldstarfeed.com

Richard Casler
Secretary

518-478-7850
rcasler@feedcorp.com

John Clark
Treasurer

315-868-5646
johnclark@nasf.us

William Colten

Immediate Past President
315-701-4482
coltenbill@gmail.com

- Directors -

President's Pen ...

Traveling across the frozen countryside with snow blowing in swirls around fence rows and barns I am amazed that life endures, and even regenerates, under the icy surface of our winter landscape. The tiny vole never stops foraging below the snow cover and microbes are processing nutrients for use by plants as soon as sunlight and rain warm the soil temperatures.



Winter is a perfect season for human renewal as well. The Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance Annual Meeting and Forum on February 2nd and 3rd in Albany, New York provides a warm venue to gain new insight into the challenges and opportunities of growing an agricultural workforce for production, processing and management. Speakers will also address agricultural transportation issues and new developments in compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act. The event wraps up with recognition of a lifetime of service to agriculture when we honor the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award, followed by Damian Mason's humorous and inspirational words to send us on our way. If you have never attended the Alliance Annual Meeting, take advantage of our special "first time" registration of \$150 by registering before January 27 at <http://cqrcengage.com/northeastalliance/annualmeeting>.

In April, as the sun starts to generate some warmth, the Alliance partners with Cornell Pro-Dairy to present the Herd Health and Nutrition Conferences. Being held on April 13 at the Holiday Inn, in Syracuse, NY and on April 14 at the Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center, in South Burlington, VT the conferences provide an opportunity for dairy producers, veterinarians, feed industry representatives and agri-service personnel to increase their knowledge of current herd health and nutrition management techniques while interacting with other professionals. This year's topics include alternative forages, animal welfare, silage preservation techniques, and immune function in the transition cow. Registration material will be available soon.

I look forward to seeing many of you at these outstanding gatherings of the best minds in our industry. What better way to stave off the cold, brittle season than to warm up with colleagues and limber up our knowledge base.

Best regards,

Rick Grant
NEAFA President

Alliance Supports Pollinator Health Initiatives



Art Whitman, chair of the Alliance Government Relations Committee, met with leaders from the Vermont House and Senate Agriculture Committees to discuss support of pollinator health in Vermont. Jim Howe, a commercial beekeeper from Shaftsbury, Vermont who transports hundreds of hives across the country to pollinate commercial crops, joined Art in the Statehouse.

It is estimated that the number of managed honeybee colonies declined by 23% nationwide during the winter of 2013-14. Comparable

Mark Anderson
315-247-7176
manderson@diamondv.com

Barry Baetz
716-380-8735
bbaezt@globalagriftrade.com

Stuart Hall
860-578-0478
stuart@morrisonfeeds.com

Corwin Holtz
607-844-3649
holtz296@frontiernet.net

Andrew Hunt
585-457-9471
Andrew.hunt@nutreco.ca

Chip Hyde
315-689-6384
chip@cnyfeeds.com

Blake Lutz
607-432-7984
blakelutz@lutzfeed.com

Jenny Mills
315-697-7669
mills_jenny_k@elanco.com

Craig Newton
802-453-6684
feedvt@gmail.com

Danielle Penney
518-382-5994
danielle.penney@novusint.com

Lon Stephens
607-651-9078
lpstephens@co-opfeed.com

Clayton Wood
518-429-2858
clayton_wood@cargill.com

Contact Us:

194 Washington Ave, Ste. 610
Albany, NY 12210

Phone: 888-445-4595
Fax: 518-783-1258

www.northeastalliance.org

Rick Zimmerman
Executive Director
rzimmerman@zga-llc.com

Louise Calderwood
Governmental Relations
Director
louiseh.calderwood@gmail.com

Sue VanAmburgh
Membership &
Meeting Registration

sue@nysta.org

losses in hive numbers have been recorded for many years previously. As with any biological system, the cause for the decline in the number of bees is complex and most likely the result of a combination of connected issues. The presence of pests, parasites and pathogens are known to stress the health of bee colonies. Regular access to food at specific life stages is essential for healthy hives. Bee management practices, genetic diversity of the bee population and exposure to pesticides have also been proposed to impact colony health.

The Alliance supports development of a pollinator health plan for Vermont, administered by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, to address the full spectrum of approaches to support pollinator vigor. By working closely with researchers, regulators and producers a pollinator health plan will develop an effective approach to manage the complex interactions among multiple stressors.

In New York, the Alliance has been participating in Governor Cuomo's Pollinator Taskforce commissioned to evaluate and recommend best management practices for the State's pollinator management plan. The Governor's Executive Budget, released last week, contains \$500,000 to implement the management plan which is expected to be released in the near future.

Guidelines For FSMA Feed Mill Hazard Analysis To Be Developed



The American Feed Industry Association (AFIA) is working with the University of Minnesota's Center for Animal Health and Food Safety (CAHFS) to produce a generic hazard analysis for feed mills, pet food plants and possibly certain ingredient facilities. The AFIA's foundation, the Institute for Feed Education & Research, has contracted CAHFS to conduct the work.

AFIA had an excellent meeting with the Minnesota scientists and 15 AFIA members, discussing the basic questions about what a hazard analysis should look like as the FSMA's final animal food rule is quite specific about what a hazard analysis should contain. AFIA ended the meeting with a number of questions for which it will seek the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's counsel.

The general requirement for a hazard analysis as drafted by the FDA states: "Each facility...must conduct a hazard analysis to identify and evaluate, ... known or reasonably foreseeable hazards for each type of animal food manufactured, processed, packed or held at your facility to determine whether there are any hazards requiring a preventive control..."

The subsection goes on to say that more specific information is also required regarding the type of feed, type of equipment and intended use, and other specific information. For a commercial feed mill making hundreds of different diets, this report will become quite complicated. AFIA and CAHFS are meeting with FDA to determine the type and format of report the agency's officials expect. This will assist in guiding CAHFS' efforts to provide the report FDA expects, while not requiring a facility to do more than needed, be cost prohibitive or drive a facility to create preventive control(s) where none are needed.

AFIA believes the CAHFS report will be an excellent resource for feed mills, but in the end, each facility and its PCQI will need to produce a unique hazard analysis.

GMO Labeling Bills Active Northeast Legislatures

With the January start of the legislative season many northeastern states are debating the adoption of laws to require the labeling of foods containing GMOs. In Vermont legislation passed in 2014 continues to work its way through the state rulemaking process and federal judicial system.



Legislation passed in Connecticut and Maine require "triggers"-combinations of other states with high populations-to pass similar laws before theirs will become active. There is some activity in Maine to request removal of the trigger provision of the law that was passed in 2014.

In New York two bills addressing GMOs will return to original committees for further discussion. Two new bills have been introduced relating to the ban or labeling of genetically engineered salmon.

Two nearly identical bills have been introduced in the Rhode Island legislature that if passed would require GMO labeling. One version of the proposed law would simply go into effect on Jan. 1, 2017. The other version includes a trigger clause. The Rhode Island proposal exempts foods sold directly to consumers from a farm stand from labeling requirements.

During the 2015 session [154 out of 200](#) Massachusetts legislators, signed on as co-sponsors to the Massachusetts GMO labeling bill in 2015. The bill is currently in the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

In New Hampshire there is an effort underway to introduce legislation even though a labeling bill was defeated in 2015. A hearing has been scheduled for late January on a new bill requiring the labeling of genetically engineered food.

The Alliance supports development of a federal labeling law to ensure continuity of commerce across state lines. We are closely following a activity throughout the northeast on development of state level GMO labeling efforts.

\$15 Minimum Wage to be Key Issue for February Legislative Meetings



The Alliance will be gathering for its Annual Meeting and Forum February 2-3 in Albany, NY and will be meeting with NYS legislative leaders the morning of February 2nd on a number of budget issues, including the proposed \$15 minimum wage. "Alliance members are encouraged to be part of this lobbying effort to explain the significant impact \$15 will have on our industry" explains executive director Rick Zimmerman. "Governor Cuomo introduced the minimum wage increase as part of his Executive Budget. Despite the many positive elements of the Governor's budget, such as small

business tax cuts and funding for key agricultural programs, the \$15 minimum wage will more than offset these economic benefits."

The Alliance is part of a broad based coalition to fight the \$15 minimum wage known as Minimum Wage Reality Check. Go to www.minimumwagerealitycheck.com for details. All Alliance members are encouraged to participate in the February 2nd legislative meetings.

Contact Rick Zimmerman at zimmerman@zga-llc.com for details.



Vermont's Housing and Conservation Board Announces Grants for Dairy Farm Water Quality Projects



The Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program, an initiative of the Housing and Conservation Board is pleased to announce that funds for dairy farm water quality improvements are available on a competitive basis for grants of up to \$20,000 to Vermont dairy farmers that are members of St. Albans Cooperative or Dairy Farmers of America.

With limited funds available, grant awards will be very competitive and are intended to help farmers make investments in their businesses that result in improved water quality for Vermont's surface waters. In order to apply, farmers are required to fill out an application and demonstrate clearly how their project will result in improved water quality and/or ability to meet regulations.

Funds for this grant program are donated by Commonwealth Dairy, makers of Green Mountain Creamery products and awarded by the Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program, in partnership with the St. Albans Cooperative, Dairy Farmers of America, Housing Vermont, the Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation and CEI, Inc.



Applications and information:

<http://www.vhcb.org/Farm-Forest-Viability/dairy-improvement-grants/>

The deadline for applications is February 12th, and decisions will be announced in early April. If funding allows, there will be additional deadlines on March 11th and April 8th. However, competition for this funding is likely to be high, so farmers are encouraged to apply for the Feb 12th deadline if possible. Contact Liz Gleason at dairygrants@vhcb.org or 802-828-3370.

Education Critical for Successful Implementation of New Drug Use Policies



A lack of knowledge about new policy requirements on the use of antimicrobial drugs in food animals, as well as access to veterinary services, are critical barriers to the successful implementation of these federal policies, according to a report released today by Farm Foundation, NFP.

"Despite months of work by organizations, agencies and media outlets, many stakeholders lack a full understanding of the policies that have been put in place by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)," said Foundation President Neil Conklin. "This lack of knowledge is a critical barrier to successful implementation of the policies, which take full effect at the end of 2016."

The Farm Foundation report-- [Stewardship of Antimicrobial Drug Use in Food-Producing Animals](#)-- cites the need for state and federal officials to work with colleges of veterinary medicine and professional veterinary organizations to quickly develop options for small producers in underserved areas to have access to veterinary services. A long term need is to

find options to increase the number of veterinarians with economically-sustainable food-animal practices.

The new policies from the FDA require livestock producers to maintain a Veterinary-Client-Patient-Relationship (VCPR) with a veterinarian. But in some locales, including some urban fringe areas, there is a shortage of veterinarians or of veterinarians who treat food-producing animals.

Between August and October 2015, Farm Foundation hosted 12 workshops across the country for veterinarians, feed suppliers and livestock producers to learn about the new policies. Stakeholders were also invited to participate in an online survey, whether or not they attended the workshops. Officials from FDA and USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), participated in all the workshops-providing details on the policies and gaining feedback on the challenges of implementation.

Details of the workshops locations, as well as a copy of the full report, are available on the [Farm Foundation website](#).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

[Neil Conklin](#), President, Farm Foundation, NFP, 202-230-8205

[Sheldon Jones](#), Vice President Programs, Farm Foundation, NFP, 630-601-4151

[Mary Thompson](#), Vice President Communications, Farm Foundation, NFP, 630-601-4152

INDUSTRY NEWS

FEED MARKETING LLC Announces Added Affiliation



OSH Solutions LLC
Solving Your Workplace Safety Challenges

Randy Schwalke, owner of FEED MARKETING LLC, recently announced that Rich Galutia and his company, OSH Solutions LLC, have affiliated with FEED MARKETING to help the firm offer expanded services in the areas of occupational safety/regulatory compliance, DOT compliance, Safe Feed Safe Food certification and compliance with the Food Safety Modernization Act. Rich brings over 20 years of compliance experience in the feed industry to the team, which also includes Al Yoder and Mike Driver who have a combined 80 years of feed mill operations and management experience.

FEED MARKETING is a feed industry advisory firm focused on nearly all aspects of business development and training. Additionally, as a Senior Advisor for AgriCapital Corporation, Randy provides investment banking advisory services for the feed and pet food industries related to mergers/acquisitions, divestitures, valuations and financial consultancy.

From FEED MARKETING LLC

Feed Ingredient Trading Corp. Announces Changes in Upper Management

Effective January 1, 2016, Gregory McCulloch was named President of Feed Ingredient Trading Corp. Greg has been with the firm for 13 years. Greg will assume responsibility for the day to day trading activities of the company as well as the day to operations and management of the Delmar office staff.

Former President of Feed Ingredient Trading Corp, Richard Casler, will remain with the firm in the capacity of CEO/CFO. Rich will be transitioning his trading activities to other trading staff



in the office over time so as to focus on vendor, customer, and bank lender credit relationships, overview of company financial operations and analysis of new opportunities as they present themselves.

Large Dairy Herd Management Conference

To benefit a broad segment of the global dairy industry, the American Dairy Science Association (ADSA) Foundation is developing a third edition of their popular manual *Large Dairy Herd Management*.

To meet the growing information needs of dairy farmers, service professionals, and students worldwide the ADSA will begin the process of drafting the third edition with the [LDHM Conference](#) to be held May 1-4 in Oak Brook, IL.

A total of ninety-six topics will be presented by internationally recognized experts in 15 areas of large herd management over the four day conference.

The ADSA Foundation invites you to register now for the Conference.

The early Registration Deadline is March 15, 2016.



Damian Mason to Close Annual Meeting and Forum **Early Registration Discount Extended to January 27**



You will not want to miss Damian Mason's side splitting humor and inspirational message! This well-known speaker will be a fitting close to a great annual meeting and forum and you can still take advantage of the early registration discount until January 27th.

Click on links below for more information ...

- [Online Registration](#)
- [Hotel Information & Online Reservations](#)
- [Sponsorship Information](#)
- [Agenda](#)
- [Printable Registration Form](#)
- [Registration List \(updated weekly\)](#)

If you are looking for places to dine, shop or visit while in Albany for the NEAFA Annual Meeting, check out the Albany Convention and Visitors Bureau link at <http://www.albany.org/neagandfeed/>

MEMBER NEWS



WELCOME

A.N. Martin Systems, LLC	Jason	Martin	(315) 923-9118	jasonmartin@anmartinsystems.com
All Star Trading	Chris	Nellis	(877) 787-7827	chris@allstartrading.com
AMTS, LLC	Caroline	Rasmussen	(607) 423-9058	caroline@agmodelsystems.com
Cumberland Valley	Ralph	Ward	(301) 790-	rward@foragelab.com

Analytical Mercer Milling Company, Inc.	Scott Lyndaker	1980 (315) 701- 4482	slyndaker@mercermilling.com
Natural Biologics, Inc.	Charlie Elrod	(844) 628- 2465	celrod@naturalbiologics.com
Old Mill Troy, A Nutra Blend Brand	Jeff Conroe	(570) 898- 5882	jconroe@oldmilltroy.com
OSH Solutions, LLC	Robert Galutia	(717) 885- 7276	rich@oshsolutions.com
Viterra	Christian Dagenais	(514) 393- 8668	christian.dagenais@viterra.com

Thank you to our current members for your continued support!

SEND US YOUR NEWS!

We often hear that Alliance members enjoy reading about news from members' companies: new hires, promotions, awards, changes to business structures or physical plants - anything you feel is newsworthy that does not promote a specific product or service.

Please send press releases to Louise Calderwood, Government Relations Director, for inclusion in the newsletter, or contact Louise with details and she will happily draft the news for you.

***Louise can be reached at 802-586-2239
or louiseh.calderwood@gmail.com***

Remember, if you missed one, past issues of NEAFA News are always available on our website at:

www.northeastalliance.com/newsletter.html



Do you have a position to fill? The Job Opportunities section of our newsletter is a free service for NEAFA members. Please contact Sue Kinner in the NEAFA office to submit your employment ad (sue@nysta.org).

Calendar of Events

NEAFA Annual Meeting

February 2-3, 2016
Albany Marriott Hotel

For More Information: <http://cqrcengage.com/northeastalliance/annualmeeting>

NEAFA Herd Health & Nutrition Conferences

April 13, 2016 - Syracuse, New York
April 14, 2016 - Burlington, Vermont

For More Information: [Click here for NC Registration Flyer](#)

