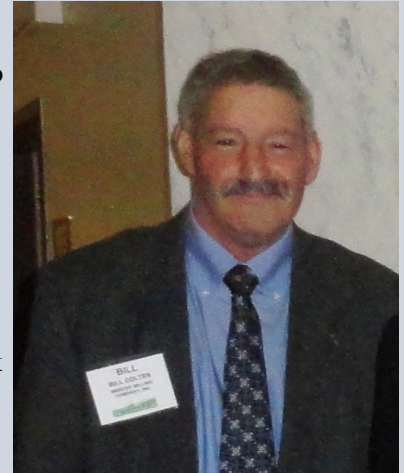


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The President's Pen ...

Following two years of capable leadership from the Alliance past President, Art Whitman, I am honored to have been elected by the board of the Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance to serve as the organization's president. The Alliance has distinguished itself as a leader on behalf of the agribusiness community, advocating for critical public policy issues impacting the agriculture industry and I look forward to continuing this important mission.



In this issue of the Alliance newsletter, you will see an article on pending immigration reform with many provisions to improve dairy farm access to a qualified and dependable work force. The proposed legislation reflects years of tireless effort on the part of hundreds of people across the country. The Alliance has been involved in support of reform measures for five years with highly focused activity over the past several months. In February, Art Whitman and Louise Calderwood traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with Senators and Representatives from throughout the northeast on several issues, including immigration reform. In March, the Alliance participated in drafting letters to New York Senator Schumer, a key sponsor of the immigration reform bill, and Vermont Senator Leahy who chairs the Judiciary Committee, responsible with preparing the bill for consideration by the full Senate. Alliance staff members, Rick Zimmerman and Louise Calderwood participate in weekly conference calls chaired by the Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform, a national group who has effectively shepherded the multi-year reform process. Since 2008, many of our members have sent letters to their federal delegates through the northeast urging changes to immigration policy to reflect the needs of agriculture.

Like many worthwhile changes, revisions to national immigration policy have taken years to achieve and have required persistent efforts on the part of all stakeholders in the process. As the Alliance looks forward to its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014 and the gala celebration in Orlando, Florida we can be confident of the meaningful and effective role we play in facilitating positive change for agriculture in our region and across the country.

Sincerely,

Bill Colten  
NEAFA President

New York Senator Leads the Charge  
For Immigration Reform

Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY), appeared on the Senate floor around 2 a.m. on April 17 to file the 844-page immigration reform bill, The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013; the product of weeks of negotiations among the Senate's "Gang of Eight," a bipartisan group that includes Schumer and seven others. Filing of the bill allows the Senate Judiciary Committee to forge ahead on the "markup" process to prepare the language for consideration by the full Senate.

Heralded by many as essential for providing a reliable and legal workforce to meet the needs of



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U.S. businesses and supporting legal integration of aspiring Americans who work hard and want a better life for their families, the proposed legislation is a contentious issue across many sectors of the country. Arguably, the biggest hurdle to passage will be convincing conservatives that the flow of illegal immigration will be stemmed -- and not increased -- by the legislation.

With an estimated 58% of current U.S. dairy farm workers born in a country other than the United States, dairy has a big stake in the immigration reform debate. And, due to its political nature, immigration reform faces a small window of opportunity.

Components of the proposed bill specifically addressing agricultural issues include:

- Allowing for current undocumented farm workers to obtain legal status through an Agricultural Card Program. Undocumented farm workers who have made a substantial prior commitment to agricultural work in the United States would be eligible for an Agricultural Card.
- Agricultural workers who fulfill future Agricultural Card work requirements in U.S. agriculture, show that they have paid all taxes, have not been convicted of any serious crime, and pay a \$400 fine are eligible to adjust to legal permanent resident status. Spouses and minor children would receive derivative status.
- A new agricultural guest worker visa program would be established to ensure an adequate agricultural workforce. A portable, at-will employment based visa (W-3 visa) and a contract-based visa (W-2 visa) would replace the current H-2A program. The H-2A program would sunset after the new guest worker visa program is operational.

We often speak of the need for immigration reform to access legal, dependable labor. But what are the provisions of the current system that make it so difficult for agricultural employers to hire legal foreign workers?

- It is almost impossible for unskilled laborers (such as milkers) to qualify for US Permanent Residency via an EB-3, unskilled workers visa. The waiting list is often backed up for years, and "laborers, farm" are specifically excluded from the pool of possible candidates.
- H2A visas for temporary agricultural employment pertain to a specific job of no more than 10 months in duration. The visas cannot be transferred to another job within the 10 month window.
- Employers utilizing H2A visas must pay, at a minimum, the adverse effect wage rate (\$10.56 in 2012 for all NE states) and provide free housing. No social security or Medicare taxes are paid but employers must comply with other labor laws (including workers compensation insurance).
- Changes to the visa application process have created an administrative nightmare crossing three federal agencies with backlogs commonly approaching nine months in duration.

## ASSOCIATION NEWS

### Alliance Testifies To Vermont Legislative Committees on Agriculture

On April 11 Alliance Director of Government Relations, Louise Calderwood, testified before members of the Vermont Senate and House Committees on Agriculture. One hearing in a multi-part series on the *Future of Dairy Farming in Vermont*, the session focused on the perspective of agricultural finance providers and input businesses such as feed manufacturers and distributors. Calderwood was joined at the hearing by Jo Bradley, the CEO of the Vermont Economic



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Development Association; Bob Paquin, the State Director for the USDA Farm Service Agency; Al Ames, President of the Vermont Feed Dealers Association; and Jim Bushey, co-owner of Bourdeau's and Bushey, Inc. of Middlebury, Vermont.

The Alliance took the opportunity to suggest specific steps to address dairy farm profitability in the year 2013, with the framework of appropriate publicly supported efforts at the state level.

Recommendations to the Vermont Legislature for Support of the Dairy Industry:

- Technical support for production practices such as forage crop management, cow comfort and herd management techniques to maximize profitable milk production.
- Technical support for regulatory compliance with a specific focus on forage crop production to protect water quality.
- Engagement with secondary and higher education for development of a trained workforce for farm ownership, skilled labor and routine tasks.
- Assistance to farmers for adoption of labor saving technology such as robotics.
- Technical support for new or existing privately owned dairy processors wishing to expand their market through new products or extended sales region.

Northeast Ag & Feed Alliance  
New York Lobby Day 2013

A hardy crew of six individuals invested their day on March 19th to advocate on behalf of the Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance before NYS Senate and Assembly leaders. Legislative priorities included support for critical agricultural programs including FarmNet, Farm Viability Institute and PRO-DAIRY. In addition, the group advocated for a vibrant, growing animal agriculture industry and pointed out how certain legislation, regulating animal production practices or crop production practices, can have a very negative impact on our industry. The group met with over 15 legislators including the Chairs of the Senate and Assembly Agriculture Committees as pictured below.



*Senate Agriculture Committee Chairperson Pattie Ritchie met with Ag and Feed Alliance members concerning legislative priorities issues. L to R: Ed Staehr (NY FarmNet) Andrew Hunt, John Clark, Senator Ritchie, Andy Sears, Bill Colten, Rick Zimmerman*



*Assembly Agriculture Committee Chair William Magee also met with our group.*

### Northeast Herd Health and Nutrition Conferences Draw Speakers From Across the US

Once again the Alliance partnered with Cornell PRO-DAIRY to provide members of the feed industry, producers and students with current information on production practices and profitability indicators. By holding sessions in two locations nearly 300 participants were drawn from western New York to southern New Hampshire.

Visit the [NEAFA web site](#) for copies of the presentations:

Recent Research on Hypocalcemia and Immunity  
Group Feeding of Calves  
Clinic  
Economics on the Farm  
Advances in Corn Silage  
Wisconsin

Dr. Jesse Goff, Iowa State University  
Dr. Michael Capel, Perry Veterinary

Mr. Jason Karszes, Cornell PRO-DAIRY  
Dr. Randy Shaver, University of





*L to R: Michael Chapel, Rick Grant (Education Committee Chairman), Jason Karszes, Jesse Goff and Randy Shaver*

## 2013 "Golf For Good Works" Tournament

**Friday, June 21, 2013**  
**Turningstone Resort & Casino**  
**Shenandoah Golf Club**

**\$160 per person**  
*(includes greens fees, cart, two meals & pre-tournament reception)*

Don't miss Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance's 7th Annual "Golf for Good Works" Tournament! This year's date is June 21, 2013 and we are returning to the beautiful Shenandoah Golf Club, an outstanding example of the PGA caliber courses offered at Turning Stone Resort in Verona, New York.

The Ag & Feed Alliance Good Works Program is supported entirely by proceeds from this golf tournament. Over the last 6 years, we have supported over \$52,700 in worthy causes, including: NY Agriculture Society Foundation, Northeast Dairy Producers Association, North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge, Vermont Farmers Relief Fund, New York FarmNet, 4-H, FFA, Collegiate Dairy Judging Teams and the New England Green Pastures Program.

***Watch your mailbox for registration & sponsorship information!***





## INDUSTRY NEWS

### AFIA and K-State To Offer Feed Safety and Quality Assurance Protocols Distance Education Program

Increasingly, food and feed quality and safety are hot button issues requiring the feed and pet food industries to prepare and respond to the upcoming Food Safety Modernization Act. In response, AFIA and Kansas State University are offering AFIA 520 - *Advanced Feed Safety and Quality Assurance Protocols* completely online.

The course was developed by K-State's Department of Grain Science and Industry and North Carolina State University's Department of Poultry Science along with leading industry experts to provide training and understanding of the industry's increasingly complex requirements for quality and safety.

"Not only is safe food and safe feed customer driven, it is also driven by a need to comply with the upcoming Food Safety Modernization Act," says Keith Epperson, AFIA vice president of manufacturing and training. "Our industry has a clear focus to understand the requirements and be actively involved in compliance."

The course starts on May 20, 2013, and will last for five weeks with participants working at their own pace and engaging in online discussion. The cost is \$499 for AFIA members and \$685 for non-members. Size is limited to 50 participants so early registration is recommended. Visit [www.afia.org](http://www.afia.org) to register.

For more information, contact AFIA's Keith Epperson at [kepperson@afia.org](mailto:kepperson@afia.org) or K-State's Brandi Miller, Distance Education Coordinator for the Department of Grain Science, at [bmiller@ksu.edu](mailto:bmiller@ksu.edu).





## Alliance Members Sponsor Northeast Youth Show Calf Summit

On April 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, one hundred and seventy youth from New England, New York and Pennsylvania were joined by 75 adults at Cowtown Holsteins in Derby Line, VT to attend the sixth annual Northeast Youth Show Calf Summit. Every year the Nelson Family of Cowtown Holsteins generously donate the use of their wonderful facilities to host the event.

The success of the Summit depends on the generous sponsors who provide funds to support instructors, supply meals and provide door prizes. Without them, this event would not be possible. Many Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance members helped to sponsor the event including Feed Commodities International, Cargill Animal Nutrition, Alltech, Shur-Gain, Whitman Feeds, Poulin Grain, and Central Connecticut Co-op.

The Vermont Holstein Association organizes the Summit to instruct youth in the areas of calf selection, proper feeding, clipping for the show ring, showmanship, proper transportation, choosing equipment and judging. This year also featured a section on "Career Opportunities in Agriculture." One of the highlights this year was an essay contest on the topic "Why I Deserve a Calf." Twenty-six youth participated and the top five essay writers read their pieces to the entire group. Alexis Ouellette of Weybridge, VT was the winner, receiving a Holstein calf from Don-Sim Farm.



*A red and white Holstein raffle calf was donated to the Show Calf Summit by Audet's Blue Spruce Farm of Bridport, VT. The winner of the calf was Sarah Hill from Bristol, VT*

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## Sheffer Assists With The North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge

Former Alliance Vice President Rob Sheffer presented to collegiate attendees at the North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC) held April 4-6 in Ft. Wayne, IN. Sheffer joined Todd Kranz, Select Sires, Inc.; Mike Lormore, Zoetis; Dianne Shoemaker, Ohio State Extension; Amy te Plate-Church, Cooperative Resources International; and Chad Wright, Animal Health International in a panel discussion of "Opportunities in the U.S. dairy industry for college graduates."

The Alliance is a frequent financial sponsor of the NAIDC.



*Members of the UVM first place NAIDC Kaitlin Benoit, Morgen Doane, Melissa Woolpert and Andrew Whitney pose with Coach Wanda Emerich.*

In total, the 2013 event attracted 223 college students from 37 dairy programs across the United States and Canada. Two separate-but-related programs ran in conjunction - the 12th annual Dairy Challenge contest and the new Dairy Challenge Academy. The contest, where university teams compete against one another, included 128 students and 32 universities. The new Academy engaged 95 students from 29 schools, including two-year dairy programs. Both events are coordinated by the host universities and a volunteer Board of Directors of North American Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge (NAIDC).

### Quality Forage: The Foundation Of A Profitable Dairy Herd

As the snow recedes from the fields and producers prep their equipment for spring work it is good time to review the foundation of dairy farm profitability; harvest and storage of high quality forage. Thanks to Anthony C Hall, Lallemand Animal Nutrition and Jeff W. Durkin, Cornerstone Nutrition for providing the following tips. Take a moment to review the fundamentals listed below and pass them along as you meet with producers over the upcoming harvest season.

Quality forage truly is the cornerstone of profitable dairying. In the Northeast up to 60-70% of dairy farm operating expenses are feed & forage related. With the 2013 first cutting harvest only a few weeks away, it's a good time to review a few of the key areas related to making high quality ensiled forages.

- Harvest the crop at the correct growth stage and moisture content for high digestibility. (No later than boot stage for grasses, no greater than 10% bloom in alfalfa, and later this year target 33-36% dry matter for harvesting corn silage crops).
- For haylage type crops use the "hay in a day" rapid field wilting technology and target 35-40% dry matter.
- Chop haylage crops at 0.5 inch theoretical length of cut (TLC), and for corn silages chop at 0.75 inch TLC. This ensures there is some forage particle length from both types of



crops to aid rumen function.

- For the corn silage crop set the kernel processor at 2.0 mm and check this at least 3 X through the harvesting day. If more than 3 whole kernels are visible in a handful of green chop corn coming to the bunk, it's definitely time to re-check the processor setting
- For all ensiled crops use an effective homo-lactic inoculant designed to reduce the pH to 5.0 in three days. This reduces the fermentation losses in the very early stage of the ensilage process and mitigates against any Clostridia activity and butyric fermentation
- For high value crops being fed through the summer months the additional use of an FDA approved *L. buchneri* inoculant is preferred to control wild yeast and aerobic spoilage at feed out
- Ensure the packing in the bunk is sufficient to achieve a minimum of 16.0 lb of forage dry per cubic foot, and higher is better. Seal quickly & effectively when finished.

All of the above steps are designed to minimize dry matter losses, enhance fermentation, improve nutrient retention and maintain digestibility.



*Proper packing density is essential for storage of high quality forage.*

## MEMBER NEWS

### [Penn Millers To Become ACE Agribusiness](#)

Effective April 15, 2013, Rain and Hale LLC will join forces with Penn Millers to become ACE Agribusiness. The new name reflects a significant expansion of business activities since being acquired by ACE Group in 2011. Penn Millers, based in Wilkes-Barre, PA has served the agribusiness market since 1887. It is an established underwriter of agri-related insurance in the US. Rain and Hale, LLC, headquartered in Johnston, IA, has been working with agents and growers since 1919 and is one of the largest agricultural insurance companies in the world.

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 [rcalderwod@aol.com](mailto:rcalderwod@aol.com) (note-only one "o")*

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

*[www.northeastalliance.com/newsletter.html](http://www.northeastalliance.com/newsletter.html)*

NEAFA News is a publication of the Northeast Ag & Feed Alliance.

## Calendar of Events:

AFIA and K-STATE - Feed Safety and Quality Assurance Protocols Distance Education Program

5 weeks beginning - May 20, 2013

Manhattan, Kansas

*For more information:* <http://afia.org/Afia/EducationMaterials/EventsMeetings.aspx>

NEAFA Board of Directors Meeting

June 20, 2013

Turning Stone Resort & Casino

Verona, New York

NEAFA "**Golf For Good Works**" Annual Golf Tournament

June 21, 2013

Turning Stone Resort & Casino

Verona, New York

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