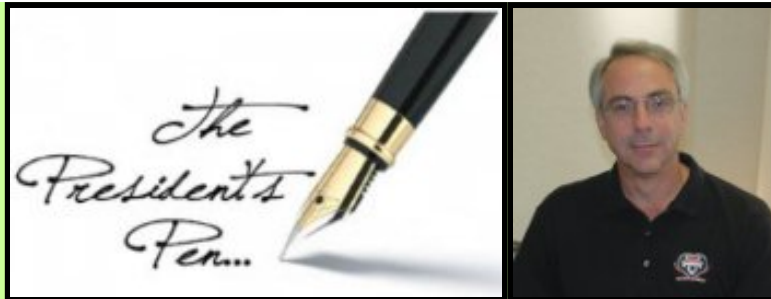




Northeast
Agribusiness
& Feed Alliance

NEAFA NEWS Third Quarter 2016

A quarterly e-publication of the Northeast Agribusiness & Feed Alliance.



What challenges are facing the US dairy industry? That was the topic I covered a few weeks ago for a Japanese livestock cooperative – and the list I pulled together challenges the Alliance and its members as well. Commodity prices and labor issues, ag technologies and consumer attitudes, environmental quality, animal welfare, and climate change. Even as we successfully pushed back on ill-advised legislation that would unfairly stigmatize GMO foods or create on-farm labor issues, we find that this spring and summer's variable climate – first hotter, then cooler, then hotter than normal with less rain than usual punctuated by downpours – may be the new climatological norm for farmers as they plant and harvest crops.

The climate may be changing, but the challenges remain surprisingly constant. And as you read this newsletter you'll see that your Board and Alliance leadership has been busy tackling the challenges facing northeast agriculture. You can find details in this newsletter or on our new web site – be sure to check it out as you're sure to find it more useful and user-friendly!

The Alliance's active engagement in supporting federal GMO labelling legislation to head off a patchwork of individual state labelling laws which would create confusion and inevitably raise food prices has paid off! In New York, Vermont, and throughout New England the Alliance has provided a clear, consistent voice that supports the rights of farmers to use science-based animal practices and crop production technologies and our voice was heard in the recent Senate and House votes. A meaningful food labeling bill is poised to be signed into law by the President. We have also joined in the debate surrounding New York's minimum wage laws for farm workers, and now we're joining other agricultural organizations such as Farm Bureau to hopefully head off a movement to allow farm workers the right to collective bargaining.

As always, the Alliance committees have been active in serving the membership. You will read about many of these activities in this newsletter, but let me highlight just one recent event organized by the Conventions Committee. In June, another successful golf tournament was held that raised \$10,000 to fund our Golf for Good Works efforts that benefit organizations such as 4-H, FFA, Dairy Challenge, and the birthing center at the New York State fair to name a few.

All in all, you'll see in this newsletter that as we reach the mid-point of 2016, the Alliance has been busy advocating for our industry, strengthening collaborations, and delivering educational programs such as the Herd Health and Nutrition Conferences. As we move into summer, let's all take some time to enjoy outdoor activities with friends and family. It's easy to forget that the same set of natural resources that make the northeast such a wonderful place for farming also make it the perfect spot for hiking, biking, camping, or simply relaxing. On behalf of the Board and leadership of the Alliance, I hope you all have an enjoyable, safe, and prosperous summer!

Best regards,

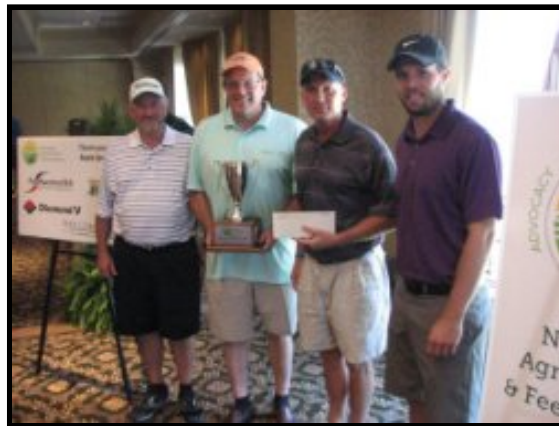


Golf for Good Works Raises \$10,000 for Agricultural Education

Congratulations to the winners in the 9th annual Golf for Good Works Tournament hosted by the Alliance at Turning Stone Resort in Verona, New York. Twenty-five teams played the award winning Kaluhyat course and raised \$10,000 dollars for the Alliance Good Works Fund.

Through the Good Works Fund, the Alliance supports youth and educational programs throughout the northeast. Ashley Willits, a SUNY Morrisville FFA member, and candidate for a national FFA office, attended the event to accept a \$500 check for the New York FFA program from the Good Works Fund. Other recipients over the years have included youth dairy judging teams, 4-H events, the New York State Fair Dairy Cow Birthing Center and the Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge Program .

First place winners in this year's golf tournament are Fred Darrow, Lon Stephens, Jim Mitchell, and Josh Lincoln



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The Alliance praises Senators Pat Roberts (R-Kansas) and Debbie Stabenow (D-Michigan) for their leadership in bringing the GMO labeling fight to a reasonable conclusion. A broad coalition of agricultural producers and trade organizations supported this compromise legislation, drafted by Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts and Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow, to create a federal food labeling program for human food and animal feed created with biotechnology-enhanced ingredients.

If signed by the President, the legislation will preempt Vermont's mandatory GMO labeling law in favor of a uniform national standard that would provide an efficient mechanism for consumers who wish to know more about food products, including the biotech content of food. Through the Robert's -Stabenow bill easy access to this information will be disclosed on products without forcing other consumers to incur exponential increases in food costs related to labeling compliance costs.

A national program for labeling of biotech food is needed to maintain efficiencies in supply chains starting at disruptions and inefficiencies in production and moving through storage, transportation, manufacturing and distribution of food and feed. Disruption of existing systems could translate into significant cost increases for consumers.

The Alliance has been part of the effort to develop a reasonable national approach to food labeling for over a year and supported the U.S House approach to food labeling that was developed in 2015. Now that Vermont's food labeling law has come into effect, the Senate bill is preferable to further delay in development of a federal program, or the uncertainty created by the Vermont approach to food labeling.

Alliance Responds to Anti-GMO Report

In late June, anti-GMO activists in Vermont launched an unfair attack on widespread adoption of GMO corn by dairy farmers. The misleading report, "[Vermont's GMO Legacy: Pesticides, Polluted Water and Climate Destruction](#)," is written by Will Allen. The author, along with his wife, co-owns an organic farm in East Thetford, Vermont, and has been a long-time critic of what he claims is the "destructive" impact of conventional dairy farming.

Allen graphed herbicide and nitrogen fertilizer use over 10 years, from 2002-2012, using data he culled from reports prepared by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture. His headline-grabbing conclusion: farmers almost doubled the amount of herbicides used per acre over the ten-year period he reviewed. Allen went on to fault Vermont farmers for increased use of nitrogen fertilizer.



The conclusions drawn by Allen imply that use of GMO corn requires farmers to increase their use of herbicides and fertilizers, even though the Vermont Agency of Agriculture data does not provide sufficient details to justify these claims and there is no agronomic basis for his findings.

The Alliance conducted its own review of the Agency data taking a more comprehensive approach to include adoption of cover cropping practices by Vermont farmers, the farm-gate price of milk and cost of nitrogen fertilizer. When economic pressures and emerging agronomic practices are included in the assessment of Agency data it appears that herbicide use has increased to assist in the management of cover crops and nitrogen use has increased in support of increased yields of high quality grass crops.

As a follow up to the Alliance findings, [Vermont Public Radio](#) interviewed a dairy farmer and produced a balanced show explaining why farmers use nitrogen fertilizer and pesticides in the mission to protect water quality and improve soil health. The Gene Literacy Project also used the Alliance generated information in a report published on their web site on July 11th.

Food Safety Whistleblowers Protected by US Department of Labor

On April 15, the Department of Labor issued a final whistleblower rule through its Occupational Safety and Health Administration. The rule implements an otherwise obscure provision of FSMA that some companies may overlook at their peril.

Spelling Out Steps for Processing a Complaint

Section 402 of FSMA spells out requirements aimed at ensuring workers across the supply chain--from manufacturers to retailers--are protected from retaliation by their employers for "blowing the whistle" on illegal activity. OSHA's new rule spells out several things, including how employees should file complaints for retaliation, what steps companies and the government must take in response to a complaint and what the burden of proof is for bringing a successful action.

One of the most important aspects of the rule to keep in mind is that employees who file complaints under the new rule are protected if they have a "reasonable belief," which is defined in the new regulation as a "subjective, good faith belief and an objectively reasonable belief," the conduct they are complaining about violates the law.

An OSHA fact sheet on "[Filing Whistleblower Complaints under the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act](#)" should be included in every Quality and Feed Safety Plan.

(AFIA FSMA Update May 4, 2016-compiled by Cooperative Feed Dealers)

FDA Letter Provides More Information on Veterinary Feed Directive Compliance

The National Grain and Feed Association (NGFA) recently reported that the FDA has released a letter providing information on products transitioning from over-the-counter (OTC) to prescription (Rx) or to veterinary feed directive (VFD) use at the end of calendar year 2016. The letter also describes VFD distributor requirements and the timing of actions for addressing current and future inventory of products affected by the pending transition

Significantly, the letter includes information on:

- Animal drugs administered in water whose marketing status will transition from OTC to Rx status.
- Animal drugs administered in or on feed whose marketing status will transition from OTC to VFD status.
- Requirements for distributors of VFD feed under the VFD final rule.
- Plans for transitioning affected animal drugs and medicated feeds to the new labeling required by January 1, 2017.

In development of a revised approach to regulation of animal drugs, the FDA stated that the use of medically important antimicrobial drugs in feed or water for food-producing animals should be limited to those that: 1) are considered necessary for assuring animal health and 2) include veterinary oversight or consultation. Furthermore, the agency asked animal drug sponsors of medically important antimicrobials administered in medicated feed or drinking water to voluntarily remove from their product labels those indications for growth promotion and feed efficiency, and bring the remaining therapeutic uses of these products under the oversight of a veterinarian by December 2016.

In response to these actions, all of the affected drug sponsors committed to making the changes FDA requested. Accordingly, on January 1, 2017, the marketing status of the affected drugs will change from OTC to either Rx status for drugs administered in medicated drinking water or VFD status for drugs administered in or on medicated feed. Drugs that have either an Rx or VFD marketing status can only be prescribed or authorized for use in animals by a licensed veterinarian.

In addition, [final rule that revised the agency's VFD regulations](#) outlines the process for authorizing use of VFD drugs (animal drugs intended for use in animal feed that require the supervision of a licensed veterinarian) and provides veterinarians in all U.S. States with a framework for authorizing the use of medically important antimicrobials in feed when needed for specific animal health purposes. The VFD final rule became effective on October 1, 2015, and applies to veterinarians who authorize VFDs, distributors who distribute VFD feed, and animal producers who use VFD feed.

For more information contact David Fairfield, Senior Vice President, Feed Services at NGFA - dfairfield@ngfa.org (712) 243-4035



The Alliance has updated the look of its website and added new features to increase service to members. Please visit our page at www.northeastalliance.com. Alliance members have received an e-mail providing the password for the "[Members Only](#)" section. Here you will find a searchable version of the membership directory and minutes from fiscal year 2016 board meetings



NEAFA Golf For Good Works Shirts Available

Don't miss your chance to purchase your very own Northeast Agribusiness & Feed Alliance Golf for Good Works golf shirt.

These high quality NIKE Dri-Fit golf shirts are available for
\$36 (X-Small to X-Large)
\$38 (XX-Large)

[Click here to print and send your order form today!](#)

Orders must be received no later than August 1st

Calendar

NGFA-Grain Journal Safety & Grain Quality Conference

August 2-4, 2016

Omaha Hilton

Omaha, NE

For more information: [Click Here](#)

NEAFA Board of Directors Meeting

September 13, 2016

NGFA-KSU Food Safety Modernization Act Feed Industry Training

September 20-22

IGP Conference Center - Kansas State University

Manhattan, KS

For more information: [Click Here](#)

NEAFA Annual Meeting

February 7-8, 2017

Albany Marriott on Wolf Road

Albany, NY

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