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## [Herd Health and Nutrition Conferences Draw Crowds](#)

Over 300 farmers, students, veterinarians and members of the feed industry attended the Herd Health and Nutrition Conferences, hosted by the Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance and Cornell PRO-DAIRY, on April 3rd and 5th in Syracuse, NY and West Lebanon, NH. The program of researchers from across North America drew strong crowds at both locations with a good mix of the dairy industry in attendance. Evaluations collected from attendees indicate the information provided was timely and of value and the time spent networking with other attendees brought added worth to the event.

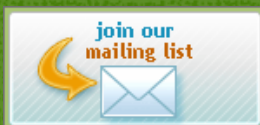


Dr. Marina von Keyserlingk of the University of British Columbia re-capped research conducted by her group detailing the impact of feeding area design and stall surface and cleanliness on cow feeding and lying time behavior, key components to longevity, health and milk production.

Dr. Heather Dann of Miner Institute continued along many themes covered by Dr. von Keyserlingk, explaining several components of a successful

fresh cow program including the positive effects on herd health and production through the prevention of transition disorders and the removal of stressors in fresh cow groups.

Dr. Bill Weiss from Ohio State University provided an overview of current recommendations for mineral and vitamin supplementation in dairy cows. Weiss explained that the dated material contained in the 2001 NRC does not address numerous factors in dairy cow diets including variability in concentrations of vitamins and minerals and uncertainty about the amounts of the nutrients absorbed from the feed.



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*Conference speakers, speaker sponsors and hosts gather following the Syracuse conference. L-R: Host Tom Overton; speakers Trevor DeVries, Marina von Keyserlingk and Bill Weiss; speaker sponsors John Azzone, Peter Karnezos, Suzy Demeester, and Doug Galliford; speaker Heather Dann; host Rick Grant (back); speaker sponsor Dave Lytle.*

Dr. Trevor DeVries of the University of Guelph delivered a summary of current concepts on ration composition, feeding level and meal patterns on life-long eating behavior and performance in dairy heifers, starting at very young ages. DeVries recognized that limit feeding poses the risk of creating undesirable behavioral changes such as reduced eating and lying time. In some cases, rapid consumption of highly fermentable feed has been shown to cause sub-acute ruminal acidosis which is known to be detrimental to health and feed efficiency.

Copies of conference proceedings may be purchased from the PRO-DAIRY Program at [www.ansci.cornell.edu/dm/proceedings\\_orders](http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/dm/proceedings_orders).

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**FDA's Feed Mill/Renderer Inspection Program  
Safeguards Against BSE**

In light of the recent confirmation from USDA of the nation's fourth case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) it is important to note the 99% compliance rate of FDA's feed mill/renderer inspection program. AFIA President and CEO, Joel G. Newman, noted, "FDA's ... mammalian feed ban continues to work very well. Data from a recent FDA report shows that firms continue to demonstrate over 99 percent compliance with the ban."

The infected dairy cow, which was tested and quarantined at a rendering plant in late April, is presumed to be five years of age. "The USDA remains confident in the health of the national herd and the safety of beef and dairy products," John Clifford, the US Department of Agriculture's chief veterinary officer, said in a statement. The dairy cow in question, Dr. Clifford pointed out, was not intended for human consumption (it was to be rendered for other products). Dr. Clifford described the case as "atypical," meaning the animal did not contract BSE from contaminated feed or feed ingredients, but rather was the result of a random mutation.

According to the February report released from FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine, as of January 28, 2012, FDA had conducted over 93,000 inspections of feed plants beginning in 1997 to investigate compliance with the FDA feed ban on mammalian feed.

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**2012 Farm Bill: Progress in DC**

Last Thursday the Senate Agriculture Committee passed their version of the 2012 Farm Bill by a 12 to 4 vote. Chairperson Debbie Stabenow opened the markup process commenting on the bipartisan efforts that went into the measure. "We will give farmers what they need when there are losses," said Stabenow. "It will be based on what's actually planted. In other words, the era of direct payments is over."

The bill reforms food and agricultural policy by eliminating direct payments and emphasizing the need to strengthen risk management tools for farmers, according to a news release from the Senate Agriculture Committee. That will result in the saving of billions of dollars, addressing the overriding need for federal deficit reduction.

The Dairy Title includes the dairy margin insurance plan and the market stabilization program based upon the National Milk Producers Federation's "Foundation for the Future" plan supported by Agri-Mark, DairyLea, DFA, the National Holstein Association and many other groups.

Committee member New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand was successful in passing an amendment to extend the MILC Program through June, 2013, at a reduced rate, to provide a safety net during transition to the new dairy margin insurance program.

Overall, the farm bill, referred to as the Agriculture Reform, Food and Jobs Act of 2012, will reduce the deficit by \$23 billion by eliminating subsidies considered by some lawmakers to be unnecessary, consolidating programs to end duplication, and cracking down on food assistance abuse. The measure will now go to the full Senate for consideration.

Meanwhile, during the first of eight scheduled House Agriculture Committee hearings witnesses defended Rural Development program benefits. The hearing held on April 25th in Washington, D.C. was attended by representatives of various rural industries who agreed that the government's budget situation warrants consolidation of RD programs; however, they noted how current investments through Rural Development are boosting rural economies.

The proposed House Farm Bill [legislation](#), released on April 20, reforms risk management programs, consolidates conservation programs, and closes loopholes in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The legislation would reduce spending on commodity, conservation and nutrition programs, and expand funding for priorities such as the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, organic production and local food initiatives. In all, the Congressional Budget Office [estimates](#) the legislation would reduce direct spending by \$26.4 billion over 10 years.

Specific Senate Farm Bill components, of interest to the feed industry and dairy producers, are detailed below.

Title I: Commodity title:

Direct payments, counter-cyclical payments, and the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) Program are eliminated after 2012.

The proposal creates a new Average Risk Coverage (ARC) Program which covers planted acres for wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, long grain rice, medium grain rice, pulse crops, soybeans, other oilseeds and peanuts. To be eligible, producers must meet conservation and wetland protection requirements.

Dairy

The draft incorporates most of the National Milk Producers Federation's Foundation for the Future plan on margin protection and market stabilization, but does not include any changes to milk marketing orders. It repeals the dairy product price support, milk income loss contract program (after 2013) and the dairy export incentive program. The language extends the dairy forward pricing program and dairy indemnity program to 2017.

The draft creates a new Dairy Production Margin Protection (PMP) and Dairy Market Stabilization Programs (DMS). Anyone who signs up in the basic PMP also participates in the DMS.

To participate, dairy operations would be required to pay an annual administration fee, depending on pounds marketed. User fees shall be used to cover the costs of the program, reporting of dairy market news, and related costs. Exceptions can be made for limited-resource dairies. For example, a farm shipping between 5 million and 10 million pounds of milk annually would pay an annual administration fee of \$350. The bill allows for a transition

period between the existing Milk Income Loss Contract Program and the new PMP Program, under which a dairy operation could elect to participate in either program.

#### Title II: Conservation

##### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP is continued with at least 60% of the funds from 2013 to 2017 to be targeted at practices related to livestock production and at least 5% of the funds targeted at practices benefitting wildlife habitat.

#### Title V: Credit

The draft continues USDA's direct and guaranteed loans for farm ownership, operating and conservation and emergency loans and removes lending limits on USDA's Farm Service Agency guaranteed loans.

#### Title VI: Rural Development

No mandatory funding is provided for the Rural Development Title in the draft language. The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program receives a mandatory funding increase from \$55 million to \$70 million per year.

The proposal authorizes discretionary funding under the Value Added Producer Grants, the Appropriate Technology Transfer Program, and the Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans Program to invest in renewable energy and bioenergy projects

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### US DOL Withdraws Draft Youth Labor Rule

On April 26<sup>th</sup>, the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) withdrew its controversial proposal to severely restrict youth employment on farms and the farm community is declaring victory. "Make no mistake—this is a major victory for New York's farm families and their strong grassroots activism" stated Dean Norton, President of New York Farm Bureau. "The agricultural community in our State and across the nation saw this proposal clearly for what it was—a blatant regulatory overreach by Washington, D.C". The farm community lead the charge to produce tens of thousands of negative comments and letters to Congress and USDOL. In the end the Obama Administration agreed to withdraw the proposal and put the issue to bed. If enacted, the rule would have restricted 14 to 16 year olds from most all work on farms regardless if the youth were directly related to the farm owner. Such a draconian measure would have changed the face of agriculture as we know it today.

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### Crop Planting on Schedule in Major States

Favorable spring weather and predictions of strong market prices have led to a boon in crop planting across the United States. A wet spring in 2011 had severely limited plantings at this time last year across the country.

As of April 29, 2012, the 18 primary corn producing states had planted 53% of their corn crop, compared to 12% one year prior. Sixteen of the states had planted more than their 5-year historical average. By mid-April Illinois had already planted 59% of its corn which outpaced its 5-year average of 17%. Nine percent of the U.S. corn crop had emerged by late April, compared to 2% from a year ago.

As of the third week of April, 6% of U.S. soybeans had been planted, a 4% increase from a year ago. Sugar beet planting was at 60% with Michigan's beet crop completely planted before the third week of April. During the same time last year, only 9% of the national sugar beet crop was planted.

In mid-March the USDA narrowed its projection of U.S. average corn prices by \$0.10 per



bushel on each end to \$5.90-\$6.50 per bu, with the midpoint of \$6.20 /bu being a record high, up from \$5.18 last year and \$3.55 the year before.

University of Illinois agricultural economist Darrel Good predicts that this year's crop will be so large, that increased ethanol use, a drought in Argentina and increased demand from China won't be enough to clean up the surplus, meaning that corn prices will fall later this year once the US harvest comes in.

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## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Ag and Feed Alliance Recognized by NGFA

The National Grain and Feed Association, at their Annual Convention in Charleston, SC last month, recognized the Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance for the "Greatest Percentage of Increase" of NGFA members during the past membership year. The award, one of two annual membership awards for state/regional Affiliate members, was presented in appreciation for the NGFA membership growth assisted by the close working relationship with the Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance. "We value our partnership with NGFA" stated Art Whitman, Ag and Feed Alliance President. "NGFA plays a strategic role in addressing national issues pressing our industry."

A plaque will be on display at future Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance events.

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## MEMBER NEWS

### Member Survey Underway

With interest in understanding your issues and priorities, the Ag and Feed Alliance has commissioned a survey for you to provide feedback. "We are interested to know your opinion about what we are doing and the direction we are going" said Art Whitman, Ag and Feed Alliance President. "The Board is committed to insuring our organization provides value to our members. We want to hear from you."

The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. Manufacturer members have been or will be contacted directly by an Ag and Feed Alliance Board member and supplier members have received an online survey via email. We look forward to hearing from you.

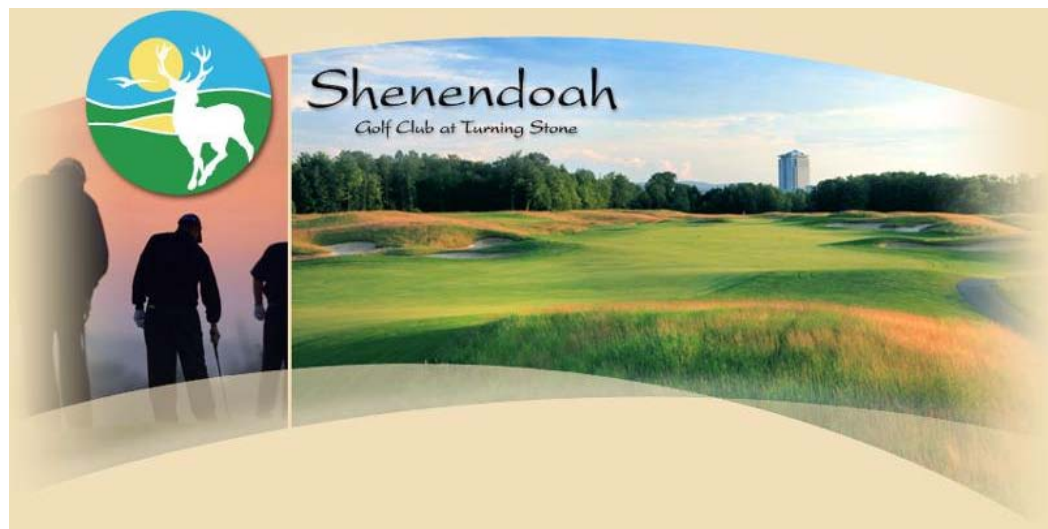
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### Thank You To Retiring Directors

The Ag and Feed Alliance Board is in the midst of change due to several resignations. Al Ames, Doug Galliford, Josh Poulin and Mike Tetreault have individually decided to step down from the Board due to various stated reasons. "Our sincere appreciation goes to each one of these industry leaders for their time and commitment to serving our industry" stated President Art Whitman.

The Board convened a nominating committee, chaired by Vice President Rob Sheffer, to make recommendations for filling the open seats. The committee expects to advance their recommendations to the Board at the June 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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"Golf For Good Works"  
6th Annual Tournament - June 29, 2012

Don't miss Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance's 6th Annual "Golf for Good Works" Tournament! This year's date is June 29, 2012 and we are returning to the beautiful Shenendoah Golf Club at Turning Stone Resort in Verona, New York. Funds raised for this event will go to support agricultural outreach and education programs. Last year we supported the Northeast Regional Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge, New York FarmNet, and the Vermont Farm Disaster Relief Fund.

Sponsorships are now available! Please visit our website at [www.northeastalliance.com](http://www.northeastalliance.com) or contact Sue Kinner (sue@nysta.org) for more information.

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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:

**Dairy Skills Training: Improve Milk Quality and Improve Your Bottom Line**

May 1, 3, 8 & 10, 2012 (6:30 pm - 9:00 pm)

May 12, 2012 (8:00 am - 3:00 pm)

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wyoming County

Warsaw, New York

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County

Canandaigua, New York

**For more information:** [www.WyomingCountyDairyInstitute.com](http://www.WyomingCountyDairyInstitute.com)

**2012 Advanced Dairy Nutrition Shortcourse**

June 4-7, 2012

Cornell University

Ithaca, New York

**For more information:** [www.ansci.cornell.edu/dm/dncourse](http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/dm/dncourse)

**NEAFA Board of Directors Meeting**

June 28, 2012

Turningstone Resort & Casino

Verona, New York

**2012 Golf For Good Works Annual Golf Tournament**

June 29, 2012

Turningstone Resort & Casino

Verona, New York

**For more information:** [www.northeastalliance.com/2012golftourney/neafa\\_brochure\\_green.pdf](http://www.northeastalliance.com/2012golftourney/neafa_brochure_green.pdf)

NGFA/Grain Journal - Safety, Health & Environmental Quality

Grain Grades & Weights Conference

July 26-27, 2012

Westin Crown Center

Kansas City, Missouri

**For more information:** [www.ngfa.org](http://www.ngfa.org)

Joint Safety/Health and Grain Quality Conference

August 1-2, 2012

Sheraton Kansas City Hotel at Crown Center

Kansas City, Missouri

**For more information:** Call Grain Journal at 800-728-7511

Vermont Feed Dealers Annual Conference

September 20, 2012

Double Tree Conference Center

South Burlington, Vermont

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