



## In This Issue

[Annual Meeting & Forum](#)

[Alliance Elects Leaders](#)

[Dr. Sniffen Recognized](#)

[Industry Leaders Recognized](#)

[Vermont Legislative Dairy Reception](#)

[President Whitman Testifies](#)

[Alliance Opposes Funding Changes](#)

[Alliance Successful in EPA Emission Standards Bid](#)

[PepsiCo Owned NY Yogurt Plant](#)

[Shur-Gain Strykersville Receives HACCP Certification](#)

[Nutrition Conferences](#)

## [Great Opportunities for Advocating, Collaborating and Educating](#)

Over 200 participants attended the 2012 Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance Annual Meeting, held Sunday, February 5 through Tuesday, February 7 in Albany, NY. The event featured a Super Bowl party Sunday evening, meetings with New York legislators and regulators Monday morning, lots of networking among businesses, great speakers on timely industry topics, and a bit of lighthearted levitation courtesy of magician Timothy Stone. The New York State FFA Officers conducted an impressive opening ceremony highlighting a strong connection between the goals of FFA and the goals of the Alliance: providing leadership and education for agriculture.

President Art Whitman, during his annual address, reflected upon the organization's past and spoke about the three primary pillars guiding us today: Advocacy, Collaboration and Education. "The Ag and Feed Alliance has been very active on all three of these fronts during the past year," stated Whitman. "Our Annual Meeting and Forum offers opportunities in each one of these areas." Art concluded his remarks by reporting on the organizational goals for 2012 as outlined by the Alliance's strategic plan. "We will focus on membership, strategic alliances and new information and services during the course of 2012," said Whitman. "Our Board is committed to moving forward on these three fronts and we will be reaching out to you for your input." Art announced that a member survey will be undertaken during the next

few months to receive input on our organization's future makeup, services and programs and encouraged all to actively participate.



*President Art Whitman addresses members during the Ag and Feed Alliance's Annual Meeting*

On Monday February 6th Senator Pattie Ritchie and Assemblyman Bill Magee, chairs of the New York Senate and Assembly Agriculture Committees, hosted meetings with committee members and Ag and Feed Alliance participants. Twenty-four members of the Ag and Feed Alliance discussed issues such as farm labor, PRO-DAIRY, Farm Net, the New York Farm Viability Institute, and the rights of farmers utilize science based animal practices in the management of their herds and flocks. The group also spent time with Agriculture Commissioner Darrel Aubertine and Jackie Moody Czub, Governor Cuomo's Assistant Secretary for Agriculture.

In the closing act, celebrity magician Timothy Stone, with the help of several audience participants, successfully executed feats of allusion including an impressive



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levitation act! Those who witnessed the event are still trying to figure out how he did that.

Pictures and speaker presentations are on our website at: [www.northeastalliance.com](http://www.northeastalliance.com)



*Pam Tetreault assists Timothy Stone levitate a table*

## Alliance Elects Leaders

Four board seats were up for election at this year's annual meeting. The nominating committee, chaired by Vice President Rob Sheffer, presented a slate of four members, currently serving on the Board and willing to be re-nominated for another term. Annual Meeting participants elected Jeff Durkin of Cornerstone Nutrition, Inc, Doug Galliford of Land O Lakes Purina Feed, LLC, Scott Hodgson of Feed Commodities International, Inc. and Peter Karnezos of The Old Mill Troy to serve three year terms.

Following the annual meeting, the Board of Directors elected Richard Casler of Feed Ingredient Trading Corp. to a two year term of Secretary and Al Ames of NutriLinx, LLC to a two year term of Treasurer.

## Dr. Sniffen Recognized for Distinguished Service

Dr. Charlie Sniffen and his wife Judy were recognized for their outstanding contributions to the animal agriculture industry through our organization's highest honor: The Distinguished Service Award.



*Dr. Charlie Sniffen*

The Sniffens were not able to make the trip to Albany, but board members Al Ames and Rick Grant organized a roast/telephone conference call during the Annual Awards Luncheon. The plaque presented effectively summarizes why Charlie and Judy are so deserving of this prestigious award; *"In recognition of the many years of research, education and service to the northeast, national and international dairy industries, together your untiring efforts and dedication to service have greatly benefitted the agriculture community."*

Charlie's and Judy's enthusiastic appreciation for the recognition carried throughout the audience, despite the fact they were connected through a long distance phone call. Feed Alliance Treasurer Al Ames delivered the award to the Sniffens following the Annual Meeting.

## Industry Leaders Recognized

Former Ag and Feed Alliance Board member Stuart Hall was presented with a plaque recognizing him for his service to the organization. Stuart served on the Board from 2008 to 2011. Also recognized for his service to the ag and feed industry was Don Domina, long time general manager of the Central Connecticut Co-op Farmers Association. Serving over



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forty years of dedication and hard work to our industry, Don is taking a much deserved retirement. We wish you all the best!

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## Vermont Legislative Dairy Reception Co-Hosted by Northeast Ag & Feed Alliance

On Tuesday February 14th, Ag and Feed Alliance leaders joined dairy farmers, dairy cooperative leaders, agribusiness representatives and agriculture college students at the annual Vermont Legislative Dairy Reception in Montpelier. Co-sponsored by the Alliance, the Green Mountain Dairy Federation and Vermont Farm Bureau, this event was an outstanding opportunity to remind legislators about the vibrancy of Vermont's dairy industry. Many members of the Senate and House, including representatives from agriculture, education, finance, natural resources and energy, economic development and transportation committees, were in attendance.



*Scott Hodgson, Alliance board member, discusses opportunities for increased grain production in the northeast with Senator Giard, member of the Vermont Senate Agriculture Committee.*

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## Ag and Feed Alliance President Whitman Testifies Before Vermont Agriculture Committees

President Art Whitman took advantage of being in Montpelier for the February 14 Dairy Reception by speaking before both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees. Whitman's testimony highlighted the importance of Vermont's current use taxation policy that removes the tax burden from farm buildings and taxes agricultural land at its "current use value" rather than its highest and best value. Whitman also commented on legislation being considered requiring labeling of any food products containing genetically engineered ingredients. Whitman remarked that consumers have options to purchase organically labeled food or food carrying a voluntary "GMO free" label and there is no need to require labels for foods containing genetically engineered ingredients.

The Senate and the House agriculture committees have spent most of the session hearing testimony on the legislation outlining the proposed Working Landscapes Investment Act. Whitman commented that while the Alliance is in favor of the proposed legislation, it is concerned about the potential increase in full time government staff positions to carry out the work. On February 23rd the House committee voted 11-0 in favor of the bill and sent it to the full House for review by the end of the month. As passed by the committee, the proposal contains a total of \$1,850,000 from the General Fund to establish a working lands enterprise fund. Specific provisions for the fund include:

- An enterprise grant pilot fund
- Technical assistance and business services for companies ready to transition to the next stage of growth
- Funds for state infrastructure investments in valued-added manufacturing, processing, storage, distribution and collaborative ventures
- Funding for staff, including wraparound service advisor and regulatory ombudsman

The Senate Agriculture Committee will continue to work on their version of the Working Landscapes Bill with the hope of voting it out of Committee before the end of March.

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### Alliance Opposes Funding Changes For New Hampshire Department of Agriculture

Andrew Dugan, board member of the Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance and executive with Kent Nutrition Group submitted a letter to the New Hampshire Senate and House Committees on Executive and Departmental Affairs expressing opposition to proposed funding changes that would decimate the Department's budget.

Currently the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food is able to conduct all of its many important functions on a cost-neutral basis, thanks in part to revenues derived from the registration of livestock and animal feeds and horticultural growing media products. The proposed legislation would redirect these fees to the Department of Public Safety rather than the Department of Agriculture, a move that would essentially eliminate all of the Department's functions.

Members of the Alliance pay the registration fees and receive value in the form of services from the Department of Agriculture's divisions overseeing Regulatory Services, Pesticide Control, Plant Industry, Animal Industry and the Division of Weights and Measures. Dugan stated in his letter that agricultural businesses "... strongly believe these fees should support the activities of the Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food because of the many ways that all its divisions support the agricultural sector of the state's economy."

The Alliance president Art Whitman and government relations director Louise Calderwood made previous visits to the New Hampshire Department of Agriculture during the past two years, building a collaborative relationship with Commissioner Merrill and her Department.

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### Alliance Successful in Bid to Streamline EPA Emission Standards for Feed Manufacturing

EPA issued a direct final rule on December 23, 2011 to revise certain provisions of the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants for Prepared Feed Manufacturing. The direct final rule, effective February 21, 2012, revised a 2010 EPA rule that requires general housekeeping practices and sets efficiency standards for cyclones operating with pellet mills. The rule applies to facilities that produce more than 50 tons of feed per day and also add manganese or chromium to their feed.

The earlier 2010 regulation required facilities to formally certify that existing pellet mill cyclones were designed to reduce emissions of particulate matter by at least 95 percent. On December 5, 2011 the Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance joined with approximately 200 other agricultural producer groups, trade organizations, state Farm Bureaus, cooperatives and business groups to demonstrate to EPA that the three alternatives for complying with the certification mandate for existing cyclones were problematic and often impossible. The certification requirement would force the replacement of a large universe of existing, properly functioning cyclone units.

EPA confirmed in the direct final rule that it was not the agency's intent for industry to replace existing cyclones. Although the direct final rule maintains the certification requirements for new cyclones, it significantly revises requirements for existing cyclones.



Under the streamlined measure, existing facilities will be required to operate cyclones in accordance with good air pollution control practices. The direct final rule also simplifies inspection and documentation requirements and clarifies earlier provisions pertaining to bulk load and the operation of doors.

*Adopted from AFIA press release Feb 22, 2012*

## PepsiCo Owned New York Yogurt Plant Construction Will Create 186 Jobs

On February 24th, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo announced that PepsiCo, the world's second largest snack and beverage company, and Theo Müller GmbH, Germany's largest privately owned dairy business, have chosen New York as the site for their first yogurt producing facility in the United States. Through the joint venture Wave LLC, the companies will invest \$206 million and create 186 new manufacturing and support jobs to operate its state-of-the-art facility at the Genesee Valley Agri-Business Park, in Batavia.

"This project demonstrates that leading international companies like PepsiCo and Müller see New York as a premier place to invest and the natural choice for their first venture into the yogurt business. With over \$200 million in private investment and nearly 200 new jobs, this opportunity is another strong boost to the region's growing dairy industry," Governor Cuomo said.

PepsiCo's investment continues a strong recent trend of major yogurt producers opening manufacturing facilities in New York. The state currently has 29 yogurt plants, which employ more than 2,000 people and produced a total of 530 million pounds of yogurt in 2011—a 43% increase from 2010 and more than double 2008 levels. In 2011, Governor Cuomo announced major investments by two of the nation's largest yogurt producers—Chobani and FAGE, Inc., increasing the companies' production capacity and creating hundreds of new jobs in New York.

New York State is the nation's leader in the production of the wildly popular Greek-style yogurt. Producing Greek yogurt requires approximately three times the amount of milk than traditional yogurt, making the industry a major economic driver for dairy farmers across New York State. In 2011, more than 1.166 billion pounds of milk were used for yogurt production. This is comparable to the milk production of 500 average-size dairy farms in New York State (115 cows/farm).

Western New York in particular has benefited from the yogurt boom. The 15-county area accounts for approximately 40% of the state's total milk production, with Wyoming County serving as the leading milk producing county in the State. By locating in Batavia, PepsiCo joins a number of other major yogurt manufacturers taking advantage of the region's existing infrastructure available for dairy processing including the Genesee Valley Agri-Business Park.

## INDUSTRY NEWS

### Shur-Gain Strykersville Receives HACCP Certification

Shur-Gain Strykersville has received Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) certification. With growing awareness of the impact the feed industry has on food safety, Shur-Gain Strykersville began implementing a HACCP program that maximizes the safety of their feed.

This certification brings Shur-Gain into compliance with the new Federal Food Safety and Modernization Act, which requires a hazard awareness program for all feed manufacturers. All staff members at the Strykersville location have been trained and are proficient with the HACCP program, providing increased knowledge and skills pertaining to feed safety. All

Shur-Gain owned feed manufacturing plants are now HACCP certified.

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## PRO-DAIRY NEAFA Herd Health and Nutrition Conferences

The 2012 Herd Health and Nutrition Conferences are coming soon! Co-sponsored by the PRO-DAIRY Program at Cornell University and the Northeast Ag & Feed Alliance, this conference is an ideal opportunity for dairy producers, veterinarians, feed industry representatives and agriservice personnel to increase their knowledge of current herd health and nutrition management techniques while interacting with other professionals.

While the conferences are held at two separate locations, the agenda will remain the same on both days. The conferences will be held on April 3, 2012 at the Doubletree Hotel, East Syracuse, NY and on April 5, 2012 at the Fireside Inn and Suites, West Lebanon, NH. A conference brochure including agenda, registration and lodging information, can be found online at [www.ansci.cornell.edu/prodairy/hhnc](http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/prodairy/hhnc) or [www.northeastalliance.com](http://www.northeastalliance.com).

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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:

#### NGFA Annual Convention

March 18-20, 2012

Charleston Place Hotel

Charleston, South Carolina

***[Click here for more information](#)***

#### National Manure Management, Trade Show and Optional Tour

March 27-29, 2012

Syracuse, New York

***[Click here for more information](#)***

#### 2012 NEAFA/PRO-DAIRY Herd Health & Nutrition Conference

April 3, 2012

Doubletree Hotel

Syracuse, New York

#### 2012 NEAFA/PRO-DAIRY Herd Health & Nutrition Conference

April 5, 2012

Fireside Inn

West Lebanon, New Hampshire

#### NEAFA Board of Directors Meeting

April 13, 2012

Via video downlinks provided by Cargill

#### 2012 Golf For Good Works Annual Golf Tournament

June 29, 2012

Turningstone Resort & Casino

Verona, New York

#### NGFA/Grain Journal - Safety, Health & Environmental Quality Grain Grades & Weights Conference

July 26-27, 2012

Westin Crown Center  
Kansas City, Missouri

## Vermont Feed Dealers Annual Conference

September 20, 2012

Double Tree Conference Center

South Burlington, Vermont

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