

Alliance Board Completes Strategic Planning Session

Message from John Mitchell, Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance President:

It gives me great pleasure to inform you that your Board of Directors took the important step of devoting significant time and energy to examine our organization and determine where the Ag and Feed Alliance needs to be positioned for the next five to ten years. This task was embraced with enthusiasm by the Board and I am excited about the results.

Our new vision and mission statements are posted below. You will see that our organization intends to be very outward focused. As leaders in the agribusiness community, we recognize the important role we play to assure that the animal agriculture industry continues to grow and thrive throughout the Northeast. Further, we have established the following three strategic “pillars”: **Advocacy**, **Collaboration** and **Education**, that will provide us the foundation for programs and services that will move us forward in achieving our mission.

Our Vision

The Northeast Ag & Feed Alliance will proactively advocate for and provide relevant, value-added services to its membership and allied organizations.

Our Mission

To speak with a collective voice and advocate for members, animal agriculture and other stakeholders in New York and the six New England states. We will work to identify, proactively address, and help resolve issues impacting members, animal agriculture, and other stakeholders. We will provide relevant services that focus on creating a competitive advantage for all served.

One week following the strategic planning retreat, the Board met to begin the process of executing our mission. New committees have been established and new opportunities will be available for you to be an active part of this process.

Please contact me at jmitchell50@gmail.com or Executive Director Rick Zimmerman rzimmerman@acds-llc.com if you would like to step up and actively participate in this renewed organization.

Stay tuned for future updates and opportunities to actively engage in the Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance.

Sincerely,

John Mitchell
President

New York Receives \$1.25 Million to Improve Cattle Feed Safety

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Patrick Hooker recently announced that the Department was awarded a \$1.25 million grant to enhance its cattle feed laboratory testing and inspection programs that are directly related to animal and human health. Funding for the “Feed Safety and Ruminant Feed Ban Support Project Grant” is provided through the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

“With New York being the third largest dairy state in the nation, ensuring quality feed for our animals is a priority,” Commissioner Hooker said. “This funding will allow us to conduct more testing in the lab and enhance the inspection process in order to better safeguard our livestock and ultimately protect human health.”

The grant was awarded to twelve states in the form of a cooperative agreement. Under the agreement, New York will receive \$250,000 annually for five years in return for enhancing the state’s feed safety programs.

The federal funds will enhance the Department’s ability to locate and inspect companies involved in the manufacture, distribution and transportation of animal feed, as well as operations feeding ruminant animals. The additional funds will also allow a significant expansion of laboratory feed safety testing programs, including surveillance for ruminant protein, mycotoxins, antibiotics, heavy metals, pesticide residues and animal-human pathogenic bacteria. In addition the grant provides funding to support training of laboratory and inspection staff in the area of ruminant feed safety.



In June 1997, FDA issued a feed ban that prohibited most mammalian protein from being used to make animal feed for ruminants, such as cattle, sheep, goats, llamas and alpacas. In April 2008, FDA strengthened the feed ban by prohibiting high-risk materials from being used to make all animal feed. High-risk materials are those materials from cattle that have the highest chance of carrying the agent thought to cause bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), such as the brains and spinal cords from cattle that are 30 months of age or older.

Questions to Generate Critical Thought about Antibiotic Use in Agriculture



The American Medical Association, the lobbying guild representing less than one in five U.S. physicians and an active advocate of harsh restrictions on veterinarians’ ability to use antibiotics, recognizes that “No simple solution exists to deal with antibiotic resistance, and more scientific study is required on the myriad aspects of resistance acquisition.”

Nevertheless, many public policy organizations and legislators have concluded farm antibiotics pose such a risk to public health Congress must halt their use. *For the Record* a publication series sponsored by a grant from ALPHARMA Animal Health attempts to bring balance to the discussion of agricultural use of antibiotics. The October 2010 issue of *For the Record* poses a series of six questions to consider when applying critical thinking to the topic of antibiotic resistance - a half dozen good questions that, as America’s first Nobel prize winning economist Paul Samuelson said, always outrank the easy answers. In this issue of the *Northeast Ag & Feed News* we have addressed the first two of the six questions.

1. If bacteria freely swap the genetic material to resist antibiotics, why aren't all bacteria resistant to all antibiotics by now?

Until relatively recently, scientists believed antibiotic resistance was only passed among bacteria by reproduction; therefore, resistance to one type of antibiotic couldn't be passed across bacterial species. A recent trend has emerged toward the hypothesis that bacteria living in a common environment readily swap "plasmids" or pieces of floating genetic material between individuals, passing resistance freely across species lines.

But, says Paula Fedorka-Cray, MAS, PhD, research leader of USDA's Bacterial Epidemiology and Antimicrobial Resistance Research Unit, although it's a phenomenon that can be recreated in the lab, under ideal conditions, it doesn't commonly happen in the wild — or least we can deduce it doesn't. "We have data that is unpublished that shows *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, *Campylobacter* and *Enterococci* all coming from the same samples, and there's no correlation in resistance attributes between them," she says. "Conceptually, you can show bacteria hooking up and plasmids going from one to the other. It's very pretty and it looks "sexy,"...but the reality of the situation is that it's not that easy. If it just takes a big party of bacteria being together in the gut, then you should be able to sample your gut and see the same thing — a homogenous population. And we don't. All these populations behave differently, and there are different pressures that have to be exerted before they express whatever they have in their genome."

2. Where is the policy position against the use of tetracycline to clear up teen acne?

Long term use of low-dose antibiotics for "nontherapeutic" purposes "would never be allowed in human medicine," says PEW Health Group Managing Director Shelley Hearne, MD. Yet fully one-third of all tetracycline used by people goes toward reducing acne. And, studies from the '70s found those long-term, low-dose oral antibiotics were associated with better overall health and 25 percent fewer infections, despite an increase in some intestinal resistance. The results beg the question: If some antibiotic uses in humans, even though "non-therapeutic," are obviously "judicious," why not for animals?

More questions will be posted in future newsletters.

Excerpted from For the Record a publication series sponsored by a grant from ALPHARMA Animal Health

2011 Alliance Annual Meeting

The 2011 Annual Meeting will be returning to Albany, New York on **February 7-9, 2011**. This year we will be meeting at the Albany Marriott on Wolf Road. Details will be coming soon! You won't want to miss this one, so *mark your calendar!* Sponsorship opportunities are available. Watch for the information!



Vermont Feed Dealers Host Annual Conference

On September 23rd and 24th, the Vermont Feed Dealers and Manufacturers Association hosted their annual golf outing, industry reception, and conference at the Double Tree Conference Center in South Burlington, Vermont. The theme of the conference was Risk Management for the Dairy Industry and featured a wide range of speakers and a panel discussion.

Tom Vogelmann, the Dean of the University of Vermont College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, opened the meeting with an overview of changes in the College. Gordy Elliott of FC Stone Trading discussed causes for volatility in dairy profitability. Gene Gantz of the USDA Risk Management Agency presented an overview of the new Adjusted Gross Margin (AGM) income insurance tool available to dairy farmers.

Richard Sellers, VP of the American Feed Industry Association (AFIA), provided an overview of actions in Congress and administrative agencies that impact agriculture. Among the many topics covered by Sellers was changes implemented by FDA concerning *Salmonella* in feed, including pet food. Sellers thanked the Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance for its work with AFIA to address the impact of *Salmonella* testing on canola meal imported from Canada. Our advocacy resulted in new FDA guidance that focuses on specific salmonella strains known to be harmful to humans and/or animals. This refined focus will likely lift canola meal embargos at the Canadian border.

The day wrapped up with a panel discussion on farm finance moderated by Gary Spiriorski of Vita-plus. Panel members included Sarah Isham of the Vermont Agricultural Credit Corporation, Jennifer Conger of Community National Bank, Robert Paquin from the Farm Service Agency and Ken Buzzell of Yankee Farm Credit. Recent tightening of federal finance regulations have changed commercial banks' ability to work with dairy input suppliers carrying large receivables from dairy farms. In Vermont the use of ARRA funds, coupled with FSA guarantees, has maintained access to credit for farms.

Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Requirements Threatens New York Dairy Farms

On September 24th, EPA released a draft Chesapeake Bay TMDL regulation that would set limits on the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution discharged into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries by various pollution sources. It calls for 25 percent reductions in nitrogen and phosphorus, averaged across the Bay Watershed that encompasses New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. However, the draft TMDL would require even steeper reductions in nitrogen and phosphorus discharge in New York's portion of the watershed, which includes all or parts of Allegany, Broome, Cayuga, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Herkimer, Livingston, Madison, Montgomery, Oneida, Onondaga, Ontario, Otsego, Schoharie, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, and Yates counties.

The blanket requirement for 25 percent reductions in nitrogen and phosphorus does not credit New York farmers for the water quality improvements made over the last decade, nor does it recognize that the streamside nutrient load in New York is already below the Total Maximum Daily Load allowable for phosphorus and nitrogen.

New York State and local officials have said that making the reductions proposed by EPA for New York is not possible. Additionally, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) has estimated that implementing the wastewater treatment plant upgrades and agricultural pollution controls programs that EPA's draft TMDL regulations would require, could cost the state and local taxpayers several billion dollars.

AFIA-KSU Distance Education Program on Fundamentals of Feed Manufacturing

The American Feed Industry Association and Kansas State University are excited to announce another distance learning education program. The course being offered is "AFIA 501-Fundamentals of Feed Manufacturing." The course was developed by the feed technology group in K-State's Department of Grain Science and Industry.

It will provide participants with an in-depth understanding of feed manufacturing. Even employees with years of experience in the feed industry will find this course valuable. AFIA and K-State have been developing educational programs designed to meet the training needs of feed industry employees and professionals for many years. The benefits of e-learning, a new method of delivery, and mobile learning technologies have proven beneficial in many industries. The course will be offered completely online, saving companies travel expenses and the challenges of being short-handed.

"AFIA 501 – Fundamentals of Feed Manufacturing" will begin January 17, 2011, and it will last a total of five weeks. Course participants may work at their own pace and engage in online discussions about the material presented.

The course will cost \$499 for AFIA members and \$685 for non-members. Course size is limited to 50 participants so early registration is recommended. To register, contact the American Feed Industry Association by visiting www.afia.org.

If you have questions about the content of the programming, contact AFIA's Keith Epperson, vice president of manufacturing and training, at kepperson@afia.org, or either K-State's Dr. Leland McKinney, who will be the instructor, at lelandm@ksu.edu or Brandi Miller, who will be the teaching assistant for the course, at bmmiller@ksu.edu.



2011 Alliance Membership Renewals

It is that time of year again ... Membership renewal time! Your membership has been a significant component in our ability to serve the animal agriculture industry throughout the Northeastern United States. Please watch your mailbox for your 2011 membership renewal invoice. They are scheduled to be mailed at the end of this month. Thank you for your continued support!

NEAFA Calendar Of Events

Cornell Dairy Executive Program

December 5-9, 2010
The Statler Hotel & Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

Cornell Dairy Executive Program

February 20-24, 2011
The Statler Hotel & Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

Cornell Dairy Executive Program

December 4-8, 2011
The Statler Hotel & Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

AFIA Online Education Program – *Fundamentals of Feed Manufacturing*

January 17-February 18, 2011
Online only at: www.afia.org

Dairy Health & Nutrition Conference

March 1, 2011
Syracuse, New York

NEAFA Annual Meeting

February 7-9, 2011
Albany Marriott Hotel
Albany, New York

Dairy Health & Nutrition Conference

March 3, 2011
Fireside Inn
West Lebanon, New Hampshire

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