

May 2009

## Third Annual *Golf for Good Works* Golf Tournament Don't Miss It!



Golf for Good Works! What better way to spend a beautiful June morning in Central New York than to play the links with your friends and colleagues and raise needed funds for important agricultural education programs.

Turning Stone Resort Casino, home of championship golf, is the site for the Third Annual NEAFA Golf Tournament on June 25, 2009. We are excited to be able to offer you the opportunity to play this great course (Kaluhyat) at a reasonable price during a great time of the year.

Proceeds for this event will go to sponsor worthy activities and programs that promote and advance the agriculture industry and its relationship with the general public. The 2008 Dairy Challenge received a generous donation from NEAFA last year.

Registration forms and online registration are available on our website at:

[www.northeastalliance.com](http://www.northeastalliance.com)

*Sponsorships for this event are gladly accepted and details are also provided on our website.*

### Agenda

#### Wednesday, June 24, 2009

- 3:00 pm NEAFA Board Meeting
- 5:30 - 7:30 pm Pre-Tournament Reception
- 8:00 pm Hospitality Suite Open

#### Thursday, June 25, 2009

- 6:30 am Registration & Continental Breakfast
- 7:00 am Putting Green Contest
- 8:00 am Shotgun Start
- 1:00 pm Lunch & Prizes



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## Quarantined Canola Disrupts Livestock Diets Throughout the United States

The FDA has quarantined large quantities of canola meal moving into the US from processing plants in Canada due to presence of salmonella. The recent salmonella contamination was detected as part of a periodic feed contaminants surveillance program the FDA conducts annually, focusing on different countries from which the United States imports grain and feed ingredients. This sampling includes not just canola meal, but a range of grain-based products and feed ingredients, including animal-based proteins (meat and bone meal, etc.).



The meal was been stopped at border crossings in New York, Vermont and the Pacific Northwest. It appears the source of the contamination is at the processing plant level. While canola was the target of the border testing, the processing of soybean meal and soy hulls has also been slowed as plants move to address the salmonella contamination.

Two companies that process the bulk of canola meal used in the US are all taking steps to disinfect their Canadian plants. It appears that FDA will require a series of five “clean” tests before product is allowed across the border. To further aggravate the shortage, one plant is scheduled to be shut down for two weeks in June for maintenance. It might well be mid summer before transportation of canola meal into the US returns to levels necessary to meet demand.

The FDA has adopted a “zero tolerance” for the presence of salmonella in grain products. While it is recognized that poultry and hogs are quite sensitive to the organism there is probably room for some tolerance in product destined for dairy rations.

Rick Zimmerman, the Alliance Executive Director, has been working closely with Joel Newman of AFIA, Randy Gordon of NGFA and David Salmonsens of the American Farm Bureau Federation to encourage prompt action on the part of processors and federal regulators to move quickly towards re-establishment of supply lines for this critical feed ingredient.



The impact of the quarantine is being felt widely throughout Northeast grain manufacturers. The US does not process enough canola seed to generate the meal needed to satisfy the demand currently in the market place. Many feed manufacturers have based rations through September on the existing canola supply. The quarantine is forcing feed mills to reformulate rations utilizing more expensive sources of protein that increase costs significantly. The disruption of the canola meal supply could not have come at a worse time for cash strapped dairy farmers working to save every penny in operating costs.

While the current quarantine is causing headaches for feed mills and livestock producers, the FDA is to be commended for their continued vigilance on border issues. On May 14 the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) confirmed bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in a six-and-a-half-year-old Alberta dairy cow.

## Feed Alliance Represented at Animal Agriculture Alliance Summit

Executive Director Rick Zimmerman represented the Northeast Ag and Feed Alliance at the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Stakeholders Summit of the Animal Agriculture Alliance held earlier this month in Alexandria VA. The summit theme, “Politics, Activism and Religion: Influencing the Debate on Animal Welfare in America”, focused on a series of excellent presentations to shed insight in the animal rights movement and how they are successfully advancing their agenda across America.

One of the most timely yet startling presentations was research by Dr. Wes Jamison, Associate Professor of Communication at Palm Beach Atlantic University, on the use of religion in the animal welfare debate. This new information shines a bright light on the well planned, effective strategy of injecting a religious tie to advancing the animal rights agenda.



The result of this campaign is a growing army of Americans who are willing to substantially fund and work for the animal rights agenda.

The last portion of the summit dealt with activating successful state animal agriculture coalitions. Representatives from Iowa, Nebraska and Ohio highlighted their organizations efforts to effectively counter balance the animal rights agenda.

The Northeast Ag & Feed Alliance will continue to be engaged in regional efforts to advance animal agriculture in the northeast.

## **AgJOBS Immigration Reform in Play**

Spearheaded by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) and Representative Howard Berman (D-CA) the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits, and Security (AgJOBS) Act of 2009 is once again placing the spotlight on the need for immigration reform to support access to legal agricultural labor. As stated by the Immigration Policy Center "The dysfunctional U.S. immigration system is currently standing in the way of addressing deeper structural problems that impact U.S. workers and U.S. competitiveness in a globalized market."

AgJOBS focuses on two key provisions of immigration reform: streamlining the H2A process and developing a mechanism for unauthorized agricultural workers to earn legal status. To achieve these two outcomes AgJOBS proposes several reasonable steps towards immigration reform:

- Mandates expedited processing of H-2A petitions
- Allows some H-2A aliens (including dairy workers) to work on an extended 3-year non-immigrant visa without departing the U.S.
- Provides immediate work authorization upon filing petitions for extension
- Mandates removal of aliens who abscond or otherwise violate their visas
- Provides a mechanism for replacing alien workers who abscond or are terminated for cause
- Provides a secure identity and work authorization document for H-2A aliens



Misconceptions concerning foreign labor in the agricultural sector continue to hamper passage of agricultural immigration reform. Foreign labor does not displace native labor for seasonal or intermittent agricultural positions. Some county employment agencies in California will no longer try to place the unemployed into seasonal or intermittent agricultural jobs, even in light of skyrocketing unemployment rates. Statistics gathered by US Department of Labor National Agriculture Workers Survey indicate that the share of seasonal agricultural workers who reported that they were unauthorized has increased dramatically from 7% of the seasonal workforce in 1989 to 53% of the seasonal workforce in 2001. Some experts estimate the current figure for unauthorized workers for 2009 is closer to 75%.

Members of the Alliance Board have been actively reaching out to their Senators and Representatives to encourage adoption of the provisions of AgJOBS 2009. In the northeast Senators Leahy (D-VT), Kennedy (D-MA), Kerry (D-MA), Dodd (D-CT), Lieberman (D-CT), and Schumer (D-NY) have been consistent supporters of agricultural immigration reform. As of Wednesday, May 20 they had all endorsed AgJOBS. Several NY members of Congress have signed on to the Bill (Christopher, Massa, McHugh, Slaughter, and Maffi), but they have not been joined by any of their colleagues in other NE states.

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## **Marc West Joins the Alliance Board**



Welcome to Marc West, new Alliance Board member. Marc has been employed by the Paris Farmers Union for seven years, starting in retail sales and then as a buyer in the wholesale division. Currently Marc serves as the General Manager of Farm Sales and Service. Paris Farmers Union services the farming community in Maine and parts of New Hampshire with feed, milking equipment sales and service, barn equipment, seed, fertilizers and crop protection materials.

Over the past 90 years the Paris Farmers Union has grown to include a retail division comprised of 10 stores in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont; a wholesale division serving customers in Maine and New Hampshire, a farm sales and service division serving farm customers in Maine & New Hampshire, and a Municipal/Contractor Division that services the road construction and maintenance industry.

Marc is a graduate of the University of Maryland, majoring in business administration. He lives in Norway Maine with his wife Kelly and two children.



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We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.northeastalliance.com](http://www.northeastalliance.com)

## Proposed Dairy Bills Face Uphill Battles

Milk prices paid to farmers are discouraging enough, having fallen by almost 50 percent in a year. The gap between what dairy farmers are paid and their cost of production has grown sharply in the past few months. But efforts to close the spread through legislation appear to be a long shot in Congress, despite repeated attempts by farmer-friendly lawmakers.

The latest proposal from Senators Arlen Specter and Robert P. Casey Jr., Democrats of Pennsylvania, would require the U.S. Department of Agriculture to base a key milk price, the amount farmers are paid for milk used in cheese, yogurt and other manufactured dairy products, upon the national average cost of production.

In practice, the bill would fundamentally revamp the way the government dictates minimum prices that food companies must pay farmers for milk. But the bill's ambitious reach appears to be its stumbling block. Lobbying groups, for farmer-owned cooperatives and the companies that buy their milk, oppose it. The National Milk Producers Federation is in opposition to the bill.

Senators Kirsten E. Gillibrand and Charles E. Schumer, Democrats of New York, have not signed on to the bill, which was referred to the Agriculture Committee upon which Mrs. Gillibrand sits. Mr. Schumer did not cosponsor a similar bill by Senators Specter and Casey in 2007.

Farmer groups are also actively organizing for modification of existing federal dairy policy. NY Farm Bureau has taken a leadership position in lobbying for MILC reform. "Our dairy farmers need immediate relief from this terrible pricing situation," said Dean Norton, President of NY Farm Bureau. "The best way to help right now is to expand the MILC program."

In a letter to USDA secretary Tom Vilsack, Farm Bureau outlined the urgency of the situation and that an immediate infusion of funds is needed in the MILC program to help farmers. The program also needs to be expanded to help more medium and larger-sized dairy operations, Farm Bureau stated.

Meanwhile, NYFB is pleased that Senator Gillibrand recently committed to holding hearings on federal milk marketing orders to examine long term, structural issues in the milk marketing system that cause these severe pricing cycles.

*From Watertown Daily Times, NY, by Marc Heller, and the New York Farm Bureau*

## The Alliance Board Tours Western New York Energy LLC

As part of the May Alliance Board meeting, members welcomed the opportunity to tour Western New York Energy LLC, a company producing corn based ethanol. Chief Operating Officer, Michael Sawyer and Director of Operations, Ryan Carte hosted the Board on a behind the scenes tour of the ethanol plant.

Western New York Energy, LLC was founded in 2004 with the mission of developing the full potential of Western New York's renewable energy resources. Production at the \$90 million facility immediately followed the completion of construction in November 2007. The plant is the first ethanol plant in the northeast United States. On an annual basis the plant processes approximately 20 million bushels of corn into:

- Over 55 million gallons of fuel grade ethanol which is blended with gasoline in Western New York and other east coast markets.
- 160,000 tons of high quality "Dairy Distillers Grain", a unique low-fat distillers' grain that is marketed to WNY feed users such as dairy farms.

1.5 million gallons of crude corn oil which is sold for further processing into biodiesel, and 100,000 tons of food grade carbon dioxide which is used for beverage carbonation, food processing and other industrial applications.



*An aerial view of Western NY Energy LLC with storage silos and rail spur in the foreground*

## NEAFA Calendar of Events

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual "Golf for Good Works" Golf Tournament

June 25, 2009  
Kaluhyat Golf Club  
Turning Stone Resort

### 2009 Joint Annual Meeting ADSA – CSAS - ASAS

July 12-16, 2009  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
For Info: [www.northeastalliance.com](http://www.northeastalliance.com)

### Dairy Nutrition Shortcourse

August 17-20, 2009  
Miner Institute  
Chazy, New York

### AFIA Annual Liquid Feed Symposium

September 15-17, 2009  
Music City Sheraton Hotel  
Nashville, Tennessee

### Vermont Feed Dealers Annual Meeting & Conf.

September 23-24, 2009  
Burlington, Vermont