



ORGANIC FARMING RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Project report submitted to the Organic Farming Research Foundation:

Project Title:

Organic Dairy Farming Education Project

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

Principal investigator:

Lamar Janes
Community Conservation, Inc.
50542 One Quiet Lane
Gays Mills, WI 54631
608-735-4717
communityconservation@mwt.net

Collaborators:

Jody Padgham – Editor, Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Services (MOSES)
Faye Jones – Project Coordinator, MOSES
Robert Hadid – Humane Society of the US
Tamiko Thomas – Humane Society of the US
Tim Griffin – CROPP/Organic Valley
Joe Pedretti – CROPP/Organic Valley

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Note: This project resulted in publication of the book, *Organic Dairy Farming: A Resource for Farmers*, in March 2006. This book is available for \$19.95 from Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Services <http://www.mosesorganic.org/mosesgeneral/booklist.htm>

1. Project summary

The purpose of the Organic Dairy Farming Education Project was to produce and distribute a comprehensive book on organic dairy farming, utilizing the expertise of a variety of knowledgeable persons within the organic field. Our findings include that publishing a book is a lot of work, that working with twenty authors increases that work, that it can be a satisfying experience nonetheless and that the book was indeed needed.

2. Introduction

In 2003 there was no current comprehensive publication available to farmers describing the practices of organic dairy farming. With the recent and probable future increase in the organic dairy market, a single book covering all aspects and targeted to new and transitioning organic dairy farmers was needed.

3. Original objectives

We hoped to publish and market an approximately 160-page paperback at a reasonable price. The following chapters would be included:

I. Introduction and History

Definitions of organic

Organic production statistics

Growth of organics

Why do farmers choose organic farming?

II. Organic Certification

Why certify

The certification process

Brief overview of material and practices allowed in organic dairying

Conversion from conventional dairy: Issues

Certification resources

III. A Biological Approach to Soil Health

Bio-logical soil balancing

Soil Testing and interpreting lab results

Organic Matter Management

IV. Organic Cropping Systems

Rotation strategies

Pest (insect, disease, weed, fungus) control

V. Pasture Management

Understanding Pastures

Managed Rotational Grazing

VI. Dairy Nutrition Management

VII. Basic Herd Health

General issues

The immune system

Making genetic choices

VIII. Calves and Calf Care

Breeding Selection

Calving area

Navel care

Nutritional care: Colostrum and feed

Marketing and transportation

IX. Dry and Lactating Cow Management

X. Milk Quality

XI. Biosecurity, Handling and Transportation

Biosecurity issues

Animal Handling

Transportation

On farm euthanasia

XII. Marketing

The Consumer Connection

Price Sustainability and Supply Management

Cooperatives and Marketing Associations

Self-marketing organic dairy products

On farm processing

Raw Milk

Resources

XIII. Resources

ATTRA materials

Rule excerpts

Book Recommendations

Index

Changes in objectives

The above topics were all covered. The order of the chapters was changed to first address the issues a transitioning farmer would be most concerned with. A glossary was added. The book grew to 192 pages and in a fit of guilt about receiving such generous grants the retail price was reduced.

4. Materials and Methods

Ink and recycled paper.
Write, edit, edit again.

5. Project results

5566 copies of the book *Organic Dairy Farming: a Resource for Farmers* were printed in time to debut at the 2006 Upper Midwest Organic Farming conference in La Crosse, WI February 23-25.

6. Conclusions and Discussion

Response to the book has been very favorable. It is being viewed as a valuable resource for transitioning farmers as was intended.

As demand for organic milk is now outpacing the supply, many companies are pushing to stimulate transition. In its first month 892 copies have been distributed to organic dairy companies, retailers, agricultural professionals, libraries and individuals. Clearly there is a need for this information.

Our underestimate of the time required for writing, layout and indexing resulted in many delays in the project timetable and in many hours of (enthusiastic) volunteer labor. All of the individuals involved in the project felt this book is important and were dedicated to producing it. With this experience we will have both a more realistic view of the time involved and a capability to work more efficiently if we publish another book. All individuals are ready even at this time to tackle another one. The compensation to these individuals provided by grant funds, even though it could not cover all time, was gratefully accepted.

7. Outreach

Brochures describing the book have been distributed by mail and email to US and Canadian agricultural entities. Overseas distribution of the brochure is scheduled within a few weeks.

Copies for public access are being targeted to inter-library loan systems in states with existing and developing organic dairy production. At this time 16 free copies for public access have been given to libraries.

8. References (with footnote number)

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9. Addenda None at this time.