

SUSTAINABLE FARMING

INCORPORATING AWA NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 3 | ISSUE 1 | WINTER 2018 | \$5

A BITTER HARVEST THE WORKERS SIDELINED BY SUSTAINABILITY

PLUS
NEW QR PACKAGING CODES
BODY CONDITION SCORING
JOHNE'S DISEASE



CROSSING DIVIDES



Looking back, 2017 involved a lot of soul searching for me. Whatever your political persuasion, the current social conflict and division isn't sustainable for any society. In times of social tension, we tend

to seek safety among those who think and feel the same. In our social media-dominated world, it's now even easier to select information sources consistent with our own views—and exclude those that are not. It takes real courage to reach out to those who hold different views, to listen and challenge without igniting further conflict, and find the common ground necessary to move forward.

I thought about the ongoing and divisive debate around food and farming. Over recent decades, agricultural intensification has greatly increased food availability. As a result, many people—particularly in the West—are fortunate enough to take food for granted, and rarely consider how food is produced or any 'costs' beyond that paid at the checkout. But why should they? For most of us, food is abundant and relatively cheap; we don't 'see' the hidden costs to the environment, animals or human health. What the public DO see is 'foodies' and advocacy groups attacking their basic food choices and lifestyles when, in reality, most people are simply trying to get by.

Criticisms of industrial farming are even harder to swallow for farmers. Despite mounting scientific evidence, admitting your farming practices are potentially harmful to the planet is a painful and destabilizing experience. Changing how you farm and to whom you sell is also fraught with uncertainty; and the powerful vested interests in the food industry serve only to stifle real debate. Who can blame farmers for resisting change?

So how do we move forward? How do we encourage changes in public food choices without causing more conflict? How do we convince farmers that sustainable practices not only work, but are essential for future food security? I don't pretend to have the answers—and could no doubt learn from many of your experiences in winning the hearts and minds of suspicious neighbors and customers alike. But I do know that we need to go back to basics. We need to reach out beyond our normal social networks and meet people where they are without judgement; to tread softly in debate and use sound science as our foundation; and, where discussions become too intense, cordially change the subject and seek common interests instead. Let's make 2018 a year of crossing divides and building bridges. And what better way to begin than with food, the great unifier and very sustenance of life. Wishing you all a peaceful and prosperous 2018.

Sustainable Farming
Winter 2018
Volume 3 / Issue 1
Cover price \$5

sustainablefarmingmag.com

Editor: Peter Mundy
info@agreenerworld.org
Advertising
advertise@agreenerworld.org

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A Greener World
PO Box 115
Terrebonne
OR 97760

800-373-8806

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TOTAL TRACEABILITY

AGW's QR codes offer consumers a virtual farm visit

A Greener World (AGW), the nonprofit home of North America's leading food labels, is launching a new traceability program for its certified farms and products.

Using smartphone technology, AGW's new QR code program will allow consumers to scan a QR code on product packaging and read the farm's online profile, featuring pictures, farm and product information, as well as details on how to connect with the farm on social media.

Building on the success of AGW's online directory, which helps consumers find high-welfare, pasture-raised meat, dairy and eggs from independent farms across the U.S. and Canada, AGW developed the new QR code program as a service to farmers and consumers who seek further transparency in the food system.

As interest in sustainability grows, so too has a proliferation of food labels making green promises. Research reveals that label claims like "natural," "chemical free" or "free range" continue to mislead millions of consumers. In most cases these terms mean very little, with minimal legal definition or enforcement; and even where a label claim is legally defined, most do not require on-farm auditing. AGW's trusted third-party certifications are widely regarded as the best guarantee that the practices on the farm match the claims on the label.

"Thanks to the inspiring level of engagement among today's consumers, many are discovering that most of the food labels we use to make

shopping decisions don't match their expectations. This is where A Greener World stands apart," says Andrew Gunther, AGW Executive Director and Supply Chain Development Specialist. "In a marketplace crowded with misinformation and greenwashing, our trusted third-party certifications deliver real transparency for farmers and consumers. This QR technology democratizes traceability and not only helps give consumers reliable information about where their food comes from and how it was produced, but connects the farmer and consumer."

The first certified businesses to use AGW's QR codes on their packaging include Central Grazing Company (Lawrence, KS), Hawaii Lowline Cattle Co. (Honokaa, Hawaii), Home Farm Foods (Culver, OR), Pure Eire Dairy (Othello, WA), Schwoerer Acres (Black Earth, WI) and Serendipity Farms (Wolverine, MI).

If you are interested in QR codes for your certified products, please contact your Regional Farmer and Market Outreach Coordinator.



PARTIAPUNTS

IN THE NEWS...

BAA-RILLIANT MINDS

A new study from the University of Cambridge reveals that sheep can recognize human faces. Published in the Royal Society's *Open Science* journal, eight sheep were trained to recognize four celebrities.

The sheep were shown two photographs displayed on two screens in a specially built pen, receiving a food reward for selecting the correct image (by breaking an infrared beam near the screen). The sheep correctly chose the learned celebrity face eight times out of 10.

WEED KILLER WOES

Active ingredients in commonly-used herbicides can result in resistance to antibiotics in bacteria, according to new research.

Published in the journal *Microbiology*, scientists at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand found that when bacteria are exposed to glyphosate, dicamba and 2,4-D, it affects the efficacy of antibiotics. The researchers call on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to consider these potential risks when approving industrial chemicals—including pesticides.



CONSERVATION AWARD

Dylan and Colleen Biggs of TK Ranch in Alberta have received the 2017 Alberta Wilderness Association's Wilderness Defenders Award, in recognition of their untiring stewardship of the prairie landscape.

The awards are presented each year to individuals who strive to protect Alberta's wild lands, rivers and wildlife. "Our work has laid the foundation for others to follow, and this makes all of the hardships worthwhile," says Colleen Biggs. "We are deeply moved and humbled to receive this award."

WHO'S ANTIBIOTICS

The World Health Organization (WHO) is calling on the food animal industry to stop using routine antibiotics to promote growth and prevent disease in healthy animals. Scientific evidence demonstrates that overuse of antibiotics in animals can contribute to the emergence of antibiotic resistance.

The new WHO recommendations aim to help preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics and propose alternative strategies, such as improving hygiene, targeted vaccination and changes in animal housing and husbandry practices.



IN THE NEWS...



MIKE SUAREZ

'FAKE NEWS' CLOUDS SUSTAINABLE DEBATE

AGW is calling out misleading coverage of an important new report on the role of grazing ruminants in sustainable food production. The Food Climate Research Network's 127-page *Grazed and Confused?* report seeks to provide clarity to the debate around livestock production and meat and dairy consumption, and—specifically—the impact grassfed animals have on climate change.

While calling for an urgent reduction in global food animal production and overconsumption—particularly in the West—the authors recognize that grazing livestock have an important role to play “as part of a suite of approaches aimed at ensuring adequate nutrition from sustainable food systems.”

Yet some prominent media sources seriously misrepresented the report's conclusions (e.g. *New Scientist*, “Grass-fed beef is bad for the planet and causes climate change”); and certain

organizations used the report to discredit grassfed and pasture-based livestock operations or support campaigns to end livestock production altogether.

“Anyone who claims *Grazed and Confused?* proves grassfed cattle systems have no role in sustainable food production is wilfully ignoring the conclusions and whole purpose of the report,” says Andrew Gunther, AGW's Executive Director. “For too long, polarized, entrenched and extremist views have thwarted efforts to achieve scientific consensus on the role of food animals in sustainable food production. This important report is a clarion call to the food industry, and represents the start of a grown-up conversation, framed around real science. There is far too much at stake to let vested interests continue to distract us from our shared goals.”

Read AGW's blog, “Grassfed in A Greener World” at agreenerworld.org/blog

FARM HEALTH WORLDWIDE

Delegates at an international conference in New Delhi, India, learned about Farm Health Online, an animal health and veterinary resource for farmers. Dr. Stephen Roderick and Claire Reigate of the UK's Duchy College Rural Business School—AGW's partner organization behind Farm Health Online—gave a presentation at the conference, organized by the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements in November.

Delegates expressed an obvious need for this resource in India, Africa and South America.



CAPUTO BROTHERS CREAMERY

WORLD CHEESE AWARD

Caputo Brothers Creamery has been named among the winners at the 30th annual World Cheese Awards at Tobacco Dock in London—the largest cheese-only competition on the planet.

Competing with over 3,000 entries from a record-breaking 35 different countries, Caputo Brothers Creamery was awarded a coveted Bronze award for its Ricotta Salata Vecchio, made using Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW cow's milk.

“To say that we are humbled, excited and down right beside ourselves would be an understatement!” says Rynn Caputo, Owner and Cheesemaker at Caputo Brothers Creamery. “Competing on the same stage as the best cheeses in the world is an honor, and coming home with an award truly reflects not only the hard work of our team, but also the well-being of the cows.”

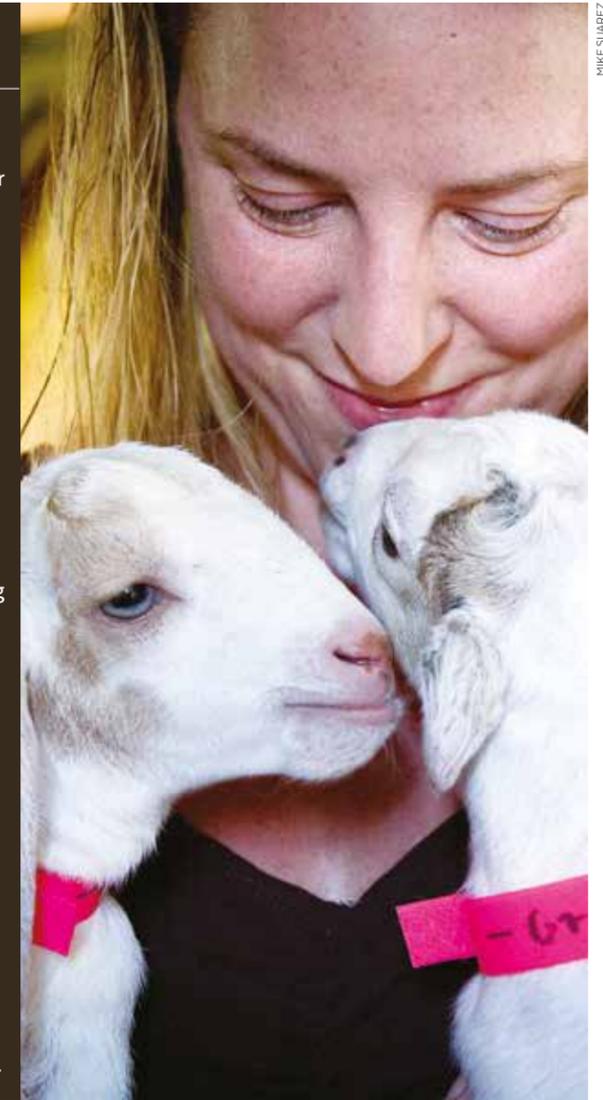
“We couldn't be more proud of Caputo Brothers Creamery's success in this year's World Cheese competition,” says Andrew Gunther, AGW's Executive Director. “It's no coincidence: high-welfare, sustainable farming equals great tasting, award winning food. Congratulations to everyone involved.”

QUIET REVOLUTION

A *New York Times* article celebrating the growing number of women farmers in the independent cheese industry features two Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW farmers.

The article—“The culture is changing, with feminist cheese”—highlights the “quiet revolution” occurring in artisanal cheese, and features Rhonda Gothberg of Gothberg Farms in Bow, WA, and Kathryn Spann (pictured, right) of Prodigal Farm in Rougemont, NC.

Both are makers of award-winning cheese using Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW goat's milk.



MIKE SUAREZ

AUDITOR TRAINING

The annual Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW auditor training took place in North Carolina in early November. The two-day event involved classroom sessions and a visit to Prodigal Farm in Rougemont, where the dairy goats (particularly the kids) were eager participants in training exercises on feeding, housing, transport and sampling for the Certified Non-GMO by AGW program.

“The annual training event is a chance for the team to meet up and get engaged in some intensive training sessions,” says Tim Holmes, AGW's Director of Compliance. “Many thanks again to Prodigal Farm for hosting us.”



A VIABLE WAY OF FEEDING THE WORLD

Sustainable farming could feed the world if we cut food waste and stopped using so much cropland to feed livestock, according to new research.

Published in *Nature Communications* journal, scientists from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) found that global nutritional needs could be fully met by all-organic agriculture if we cut food waste and stopped using cropland to feed animals. Critics often emphasize that global conversion to sustainable methods would lead to higher land use and thus would not be a feasible alternative. However, the researchers

suggest a more realistic approach would involve combinations of sustainable methods and a reduction in food waste and the consumption of food animal protein, as well as transitioning land from growing livestock feed to human food. They argue that such a scenario could help sustain the world's 2050 population using no more than existing farmland.

“As the researchers state, sustainability is highly complex,” says Andrew Gunther, AGW's Executive Director. “While the solutions will be multi-faceted and place-specific, raising ruminants on non-arable land will undoubtedly play an important role.”



Like what you read?

Do you value our work to support market transparency and pasture-based farming?

Here's how to help us help **you**—and others

AGW is an independent and non-profit organization. Because we are not dependent on certification fees, we can remain completely impartial in our auditing, resulting in unrivaled integrity and trust. But we DO rely on supporter donations. Please consider supporting us with a one-time or regular donation and membership, or promoting the AGW membership program with your friends, family and customers!

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Find your farm at aspcas.org/farmsbystate



Opinion

ANTIBIOTIC-FREE LABELING

Confusing to consumers, frustrating for producers, says Bob Martin

In the mid 1970s, the medical community began looking at ways to limit antibiotic use in response to concerns about rising antibiotic-resistant infections in the clinical setting. The medical community knew that improper use of antibiotics would result in those bacteria not killed by the drug becoming resistant, and that resistance would be replicated and spread throughout the bacterial world. Sir Alexander Fleming, the scientist who first discovered naturally occurring penicillin and its infection fighting capabilities, warned of potential misuse—and the problem of resistance—in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech for his work in 1945.

Research began in earnest in the 1970s, and continues today, to understand the link between antibiotic use in food animal production and resistance. Public health researchers began confirming what had long been suspected: that daily, low level use of antibiotics in the typical food animal production system resulted in antibiotic-resistant bacteria. The latest research is tracing, through genome sequencing, the origins of antibiotic-resistant infections in people back to antibiotic use in food animal production.

Attention on the food animal link to antibiotic resistance was heightened by the release of *Putting Meat on the Table: Industrial Farm Animal Production in America*, the final report of the Pew Commission on Industrial Farm Production and the ensuing efforts by The Pew Charitable Trusts to curtail antibiotics used in that setting through regulatory and legislative action at the federal level. Pew's interest in curtailing antibiotic use joined existing efforts by the Union of Concerned Scientists, Environmental Defense Fund and Keep Antibiotics Working, a coalition of non-governmental organizations promoting restrictions.

With the growth in interest and activity, several non-governmental groups developed recommendations on antibiotic use they promote for adoption by institutional food service providers,

retail restaurants, federal, municipal and state governments as they compete for media attention. But this has led to a dizzying flurry of requests for, and claims of, "raised without antibiotics," "raised with responsible antibiotic use," and "no antibiotics ever," which is confusing to consumers and must be frustrating for producers. While the claim of "no antibiotics ever" and "raised without antibiotics" are easy marketing slogans, they are, in fact, not necessary and may harm the ability to meet demands for meat from farms where antibiotics are used appropriately and responsibly.

Restrictive policies like "no antibiotics ever" may actually harm smaller producers with reduced marketing options. If a smaller producer uses antibiotics to treat a sick animal (or the entire herd or flock) when disease is detected, as they should, they may lose a premium price for what they produce and have limited alternative markets. A large, industrial producer faced with the same dilemma simply diverts that animal to an alternative conventional marketing line. In 2009, the USDA's Economic Research Service issued a report, *Economics of Antibiotic Use in U.S. Livestock Production*, stating that larger operations were more likely to use routine antibiotics as opposed to smaller operations and had more market access options.

So, what is a consumer supposed to do? It makes sense to look for a certification that is proven, has a track record and is independently verified. The gold standard for that assurance is the Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW label. It assures that animals are raised according to the highest welfare standards, that antibiotics are used responsibly, that environmental considerations are addressed, and that independent farm producers are recognized—and can benefit—from their hard work. Other producer groups like the Ozark Mountain Swine Cooperative, Niman Ranch Brand Pork, and Applegate Natural and Organic Meats are aggregations of producers with strong, proven labels as well.

Bob Martin is Program Director for the Food System Policy Program at the Center for a Livable Future at Johns Hopkins University

SIDELINED BY SUSTAINABILITY

In the race to achieve a more sustainable food system, many agricultural workers are being left behind, warn Whitney Witthaus and Zachary Herman

PRICES
DOWN

SAVE
\$\$\$

One in seven
workers in the
U.S. employed
in the food
industry

More than
half of all food
system workers
make less than
\$10 per hour

As participants in or producers of sustainable food, you have already begun your deconstruction of 'normal.' In altering and improving your methods of production, you are not only working to protect and enhance the ecological environment and the inherent values of our landscapes, you are also ensuring we can sustainably feed the mouths of today, as well as tomorrow.

Yet if we pivot our gaze, and look back rather than forward, we see a history of injustice and inequity still left very much unaddressed by current efforts to reform agriculture.

The agricultural laborer

Labor serves as the site of more potential exploitation than any arrangement of identity in human history. This worker-employer relationship is essential for the continuation of an economy where workers sell their labor to the owners of machines, property, software—the means that allow production to occur. However, excessive exploitation often occurs as a result of the drivers of competition, where business owners and employers feel under pressure to cut costs, intensify workers' labor and reduce wages. This could be said to be true for all industries; but for the laborers in the food system, research arguably reveals an exceedingly racialized and abusive history that distinguishes the agricultural laborer from the general laborer.

At over 21.5 million workers, the food system is the largest employment sector in the U.S., with one in seven workers in the U.S. employed in one of five key segments in the sector—production, processing, distribution, retail and service. These

include laborers in fields and fisheries (production), bakers and slaughterhouse workers (processing), drivers and warehouse workers (distribution), grocery store cashiers and stockers (retail), and restaurant servers, cooks, dishwashers and street vendors (servers). But while these professions are disparate and diverse, the experiences of inadequate payment and poor working conditions are all too frequently shared.

More than half of all food system workers in the U.S. make less than \$10 per hour—far lower than the 2016 U.S. livable wage of \$15.84 per hour. A comparable rank-and-file worker in construction, for example, can earn nearly double the wage of the typical food worker, at \$17 per hour (\$30,000 per year). Agriculture and food processing are consistently ranked as one of the three most dangerous occupations in the U.S. Farm workers, for example, have higher rates of toxic chemical injuries and skin disorders than any other occupational group in the country, while workers on U.S. meat processing lines are among the lowest paid, suffering deplorable and dangerous working conditions, with few rights or benefits. A report on the health of California farmworkers found that “no group of workers in America faces greater barriers in accessing basic health services.”

Of the estimated 2 to 3 million farm workers in the U.S., 68 percent were born in Mexico, with the U.S. Department of Labor reporting that 53 percent of farm workers nationally are undocumented (working without legal authorization), 25 percent are U.S. citizens, and 21 percent are legal permanent residents (green card holders). Due to the precarious immigration status of some agricultural laborers, exploitation



of laborers may be both inflicted and tolerated because of threats of deportation. These statistics reveal a consistent story of working poverty that differs from all other fields of work.

Furthermore, government policy, such as the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, explicitly exclude farm workers, preventing the right to collectively unionize that was awarded in 1935 to all other industries (aside from domestic workers, which inhabit another highly racialized industry) and preventing overtime wages for overtime work.

Low pay has wider consequences. Today, many frontline food workers struggle simply to make ends meet. In 2010, 11 percent of food system workers were on food stamps—now known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—compared to 6 percent of workers in other industries. By 2016, an estimated 13 percent of all food workers—or nearly 2.8 million people—were on food stamps, compared with 6 percent across other industries. Food workers now use food stamps at 2.2 times the rate of all other industries, a tremendous increase from 1.8 times the rate of all other industries in 2010. With their workers increasingly reliant on such public assistance programs, the food industry is arguably externalizing significant costs—the payment of a living wage—to the U.S. taxpayer.

What needs to change?

The modern food industry is involved in a global race, where actors ‘win’ (or survive long enough to continue) only when they manage to lessen the costs of production. This is done either by cutting corners with the quality or sourcing/production of materials, or by lowering the wages of their workers, generally as technology increases productivity.

As sustainable producers, however, you have already stepped away from this race at least once, swimming against the tide of industrialization and producing food in a way that not only minimizes the impact on the wider environment, but has the potential to keep carbon in the ground and help to mitigate our changing climate.

But it is now time for another change: to ensure that sustainable agriculture does for food workers what it does for the soil, water and air, and the health and wellbeing of consumers who are able to buy it. Living wages, dignity and the ability to organize legally are needed today.

It can be done

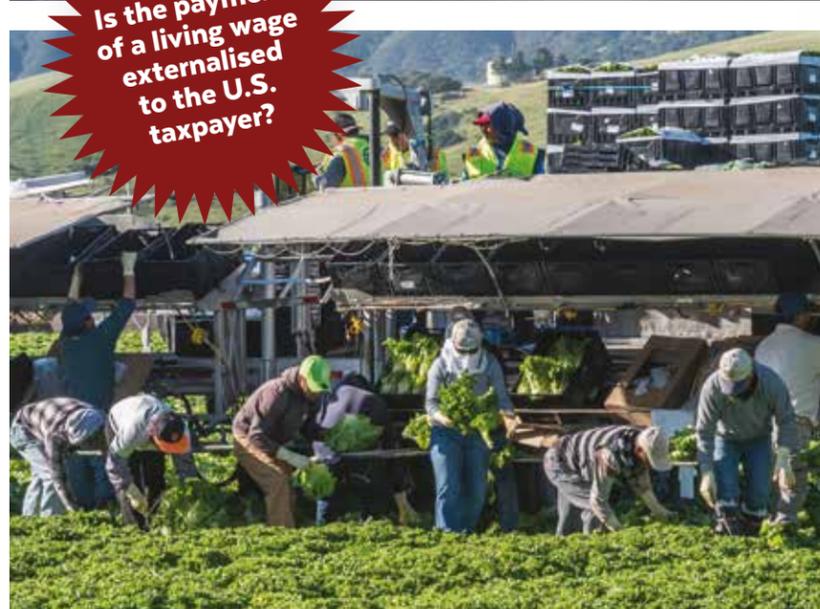
The emerging alternative food movement has shown the wider industry that it is not only possible to introduce new values to the food chain, but that these values can ripple and begin



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to change *everything*. This movement defies the logic of capital, and is a vital inroad to social change because of it. It used to be impossible to compete in the market without using industrial methods, such as confinement operations. Yet you do it every day.

We know that growing numbers of consumers are finding out how their food is produced, and they are willing and eager to pay more for food that meets their values. Changing ‘normal’ for agricultural workers is possible, and sustainable farmers and food businesses have a chance to lead the way. For example, Tim Cochran of Swanton Berry Farm in California has already rewritten impossible three times: First, by growing strawberries without pesticides (America’s first organic strawberry); secondly, by voluntarily inviting the unionization of his workers, who are represented by the United Farm Workers; and lastly by offering his workers dental and medical benefits, vacation pay and pension plans.

To change the cycle of exploitation, new values must be added to our collective understanding of what ‘sustainable food’ really means—namely the wellbeing and working conditions of agricultural and food laborers. This is not only fundamentally right, it’s absolutely achievable.

Rewards for change

Just as trusted farm certifications can offer premiums for the sustainable farmer, there are market-based incentives for improving working conditions and wages for agricultural laborers, too.

The Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) is an innovative new policy initiative that looks to change the way public institutions purchase food. The five key values of the GFPP require that all food should prioritize animal welfare, nutrition, environmental sustainability, local economies, and finally, a valued workforce. Created by the Los Angeles Food Policy Council, the GFPP is now a national program and is an important starting point to encourage improved practices and shifts in the food system.

The GFPP policy can be adopted at various levels and scales, with varying budgets and capacities, and has already been formally adopted by six major public institutions in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland and Chicago. Elsewhere, groups are actively lobbying to make the GFPP a priority in Washington, D.C., Cincinnati, New York City and Twin Cities (Minneapolis/St. Paul). These early adoptions leverage multi-million dollar budgets to change industry norms and allowances, as lucrative purchasing contracts with governments are made available to producers who are doing things very differently than the major corporate entities like Tyson, Ameristar and others. Governments, which are legally bound to the



FOOD CHAIN WORKERS ALLIANCE

Founded in 2009, the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) is a coalition of worker-based organizations whose members plant, harvest, process, pack, transport, prepare, serve and sell food; organizing to improve wages and working conditions for all workers along the food chain. The Alliance works together to build a more sustainable food system that respects workers’ rights, based on the principles of social, environmental and racial justice, in which everyone has access to healthy and affordable food. Currently, FCWA has 31 members representing roughly 340,000 food workers in the U.S. and Canada. foodchainworkers.org



protection of public and environmental health, can be made accountable to the people they serve. This is apparent in the signal sent by GFPP: a transition toward purchasing based on values, not solely profit or minimizing costs.

Sustainable producers are in a position—particularly as members of producer groups or other marketing groups—to take advantage of this industry change, being ready to bid for GFPP contracts when they arrive in cities near you. Many of you already meet (and most likely exceed) the standards of nutrition, animal welfare, local economies and sustainability. However, you may not yet meet labor standards of the valued workforce.

The Food Chain Workers Alliance, in partnership with Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC) United, is performing research on restaurants that hold fair labor as a key aspect of their operations. For the 200 restaurants in ROC’s Restaurants Advancing Industry Standards in Employment (RAISE) program, early results suggests that, as well as being concerned with sourcing environmentally sustainable food, restaurants are increasingly looking to source food produced with fair labor practices.

The new normal

By focusing on environmental sustainability and good animal welfare, many farmers may feel they have already redefined their agricultural production. That niche can be cozy; and it is also fair to say that becoming part of a revolutionary movement towards overhauling and redefining ways of managing labor could be uncomfortable and challenging. However, we cannot sit on our (sustainable) laurels. Organic production may have originated from a refusal to accept the ‘norms’ of industrial agriculture. Yet despite the advances in environmental management we might expect, researchers and journalists alike have found that the end result on some organic farms—particularly the larger operations—has been increased exploitation and lower wages for agricultural workers. Not what many conscientious consumers would imagine.

This is not just about doing what is right. As the GFPP shows, there can be a reward—and an outlet for your products—from implementing a new set of realities for the conditions and wages of farm labor. Where GFPP and RAISE lead, others will follow. Working together, we can—and will—redefine normal when it comes to the employment of agricultural laborers, and claim the mantle of true sustainable production.

Whitney Witthaus and Zachary Herman write for *The Food Chain Workers Alliance*. Full references/statistics for this article are available on request.

Using 'wireless' tech to take card payments can boost market sales—and more. Christopher Wayne explains ...



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THE POWER OF POINT

OF SALE

Selling direct to the public is more competitive than ever before. From the proliferation of farmers' markets to the recent wave of home delivery services, many farmers are feeling the pressure to update their marketing strategies or suffer plateauing—and in some cases declining—sales.

One simple tactic to increase sales is implementing systems to accept credit and debit cards at farmers' markets. GrowNYC has been helping farmers to explore the options.

Paying by plastic

Traditionally, the hustle and bustle of markets has lent itself to hand-to-hand transactions and cash-stuffed aprons. Today's shoppers, however, much prefer using plastic: A 2016 study by Total System Services found that 89 percent of shoppers choose debit/credit cards or "digital wallets" as their preferred method of payment, with only 11 percent specifying a preference for cash. Yet farmers' market vendors have been slow to adopt technology that would appeal to these clear shopping preferences.

Point of sale (POS) systems like Square offer simple, effective ways for farmers to accept debit and credit currencies. You can think of a POS system as a modern-day cash register—a combination of hardware and software that can be fitted to a cell phone or tablet, such as an iPad. POS systems can process debit and credit transactions and gather vital, real-time information about your farm business.

The hardware needed is minimal. At its simplest, a 'smart' cell phone with an audio jack is outfitted with a wireless card reader to process

credit and debit transactions. More advanced set-ups might include a device such as an iPad with a larger screen, a stand that can swivel the device for easy customer signatures, or a more stable card reader connected to the charging port. Hardware add-ons include digital cash boxes, Bluetooth receipt printers, digital scales and even bar-code readers. All this technology is chargeable and relies on wireless internet access, making it ideal for farmers' markets.

Choosing a system

Selecting a POS system can be dizzying. Our research uncovered well over 50 different systems available for small retail businesses. A good place to begin is with this question: "Do I want a simple system that just processes debit and credit transactions, or a more comprehensive system that will feed me sales data to help me manage my business?"

If you are looking for simplicity, Square and Clover are worth considering. Both POS systems offer a free card reader, free software and a flat-rate service charge applied as a percentage of each transaction.

While Square stands out as both simple and powerful, online forums suggest a lack of consistent customer service and inability to process decimal weights if you plan to compute prices via the POS system.

Clover is sold only through partnering merchants, such as banks or business suppliers, which means pricing can vary, and farmers have reported confusion in finding an appropriate vendor. If you can get past this, though, you

will find a simple, straightforward system with a wide range of functional hardware.

A management tool

Most producers who adopt the card processing functionality of POS see an income boost, and this is only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the power of POS. If utilized correctly, these systems can provide a wealth of vital sales, employee and customer data that can dramatically improve your ability to manage your farm businesses:

- **Sales data reporting:** Sales are the meat and potatoes of direct-retail farm businesses, yet most farmers do not have a detailed understanding of how much, when and in what quantity their sales occur. By inputting your farm's product list, POS systems can generate reports that show farmers which products are bringing them the most profit, which times of the day/week/year are the busiest for their business, and which items are not selling well.
- **Customer management:** Being in regular contact with your customers through email and social media marketing is a fantastic way to generate new sales, receive useful customer feedback and build customer loyalty. POS systems have customer management features that can track repeat customers, generate targeted marketing campaigns, monitor gift cards and create custom loyalty programs.
- **Inventory management:** POS systems can make your on-farm and at-market inventory easier to manage. Farmers can manage large inventories directly from crop plans by importing Excel

spreadsheets, including valuable information such as availability, cost of goods sold (COGS), varieties, etc. Notifications can be created to alert you when items are running low, and inventory can be tied to back-end accounting systems like Quickbooks for seamless record keeping.

- **Employee management:** Attentive, professional and knowledgeable sales employees can make a dramatic difference to your farm's bottom line. Farm owners do not always have the chance to attend markets, which can make it very difficult to determine an employee's performance. POS systems can generate the reports that show sales by employee and clock-in and clock-out times.

When choosing a comprehensive POS system, start by considering which of the above features is most important to you as a farm business owner. Some of our favorite systems with these advanced features include Shopkeep, Revel, Infotouch and Mobile Market Register. (For a more comprehensive review of these systems, visit the resources pages at grownyc.org/farmroots.)

Listen to your customers

It doesn't matter whether you choose a system that allows you the basics of card processing or a more comprehensive system with the ability to generate management data. What's important is that you outfit your market stand in a manner that matches the way customers increasingly prefer to shop. POS systems are a great first step. And for us, the proof is in the pudding: Farmers who have worked with us to adopt systems have seen, on average, a 6-10 percent increase in sales.

89% of shoppers choose debit or credit cards and "digital wallets" as their preferred payment method



Modernizing Your Farm Sales from growNYC includes a useful comparison of the main POS systems. Contact *farmroots* @grownyc.org or 212-788-7900

WIPE OFF THE MAP

Johne's disease is untreatable in cattle, sheep, goats and bison, that spreads easily and causes substantial economic losses. Yet it is often overlooked, says Jennifer L. Burton DVM



Introducing a 'healthy' bull can compromise an otherwise closed herd

Sustainable livestock farmers know that when management focuses on promoting health, animals tend to be more resistant to disease. As a result, we sometimes worry less about targeted prevention for specific diseases. However, paratuberculosis—commonly known as Johne's disease—works with the healthy immune system. Johne's is neither treatable nor preventable by vaccine, and must therefore be considered on even the best-managed farms.

When *Mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis* (MAP) is ingested by a healthy young animal before its immune system has fully developed—usually in the first month of life—this bacteria moves inside immune cells located in the small intestine. Shielded within those cells for the rest of the animal's life, MAP survives and reproduces while the immune system attacks. Over time, progressive damage to the small intestine hinders nutrient absorption, subtly decreasing feed efficiency, milk production and growth rates. It takes years for weight loss and/or diarrhea to become obvious. By this time, the animal is insatiably hungry, has transmitted the disease to others and contaminated the farm environment.

Prevention

In most cases, Johne's is acquired when an infected animal enters the herd. MAP is transmitted in manure, so even a short-term visitor could introduce the infection. Keeping outside animals off your farm is the best way to keep Johne's out. If a closed herd is impractical, purchasing animals from farms determined to be MAP-free by testing is recommended. A third option is to survey the source herd yourself. Look for poor body condition or diarrhea in cattle and bison. Diarrhea is less common in MAP-infected sheep and goats, so focus on body condition in these species.

If procuring young stock, request that the dam be tested. Before considering a purchase from a positive herd, make sure the producer practices good infection control (see below) and that the dam is negative. These guidelines apply to the purchase of guardian llamas or alpacas as well, as these animals can be infected with MAP.

While pasteurization kills the vast majority of MAP in milk or meat, MAP organisms occasionally survive standard pasteurization, so use only colostrum and milk from Johne's-free sources. A properly managed compost pile may kill MAP, but research is limited, so consider the source for any manure or compost applied to pastures. Finally, disinfect items such as used equipment or boots before bringing them onto your farm.

Detection

Johne's detection requires monitoring of individual animals. This disease should be suspected if you

JOHN PATHOLOGY CENTER



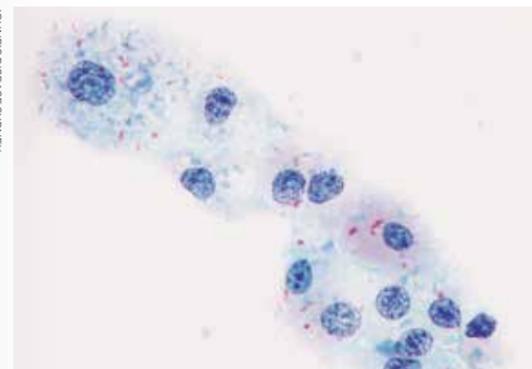
Small intestine of adult female Holstein Friesian cow with Johne's disease, showing severe and diffuse thickening of the intestinal wall

observe a drop in a dairy animal's milk production, or weight loss despite a good appetite. Diarrhea could be the only sign of Johne's in a cow, but in MAP-infested sheep and goats diarrhea is less common and the primary sign tends to be weight loss. In all species, appetite remains strong and fever is absent. If a ruminant with signs of internal parasites does not respond to deworming, consider Johne's.

A necropsy may help you decide whether to pursue Johne's testing. MAP-related inflammation affects the lining of the ileum, where the small and large intestines meet. The ileal lining will appear rougher than other areas of the small intestine, like corrugated cardboard. This thickening is more prominent in cattle, but may be seen in sheep and goats. Abscesses may also be seen near the ileum. Goat producers should note that similar abscesses occur with Caseous lymphadenitis (CLA), and further assistance may be needed with necropsy in a CLA herd.

Definitive diagnosis requires laboratory testing. Some tests look for MAP in feces or in the environment; others look for antibodies in blood or milk. It is crucial to remember that infected animals often test negative. MAP diagnostics work differently in different species, and testing

JOHNE'S DISEASE SYMPTOM



Ovine cells with the mycobacterium

strategies vary widely depending on herd status and your goals, so work with a veterinarian to determine the most effective and economic approach for your farm.

Control

Control of Johne's disease focuses on protecting susceptible animals while eliminating sources. Outside of a host animal, most MAP organisms die within a few months, although MAP has been known to survive nearly a year on pasture and as long as 17 months in water. Consider a pasture contaminated for at least one year after grazing by potentially infected livestock (wildlife are not considered reservoirs) or after receiving infected manure through runoff or application. Pastures with ponds should be rested for at least 18 months.

If you are unable to adhere to recommended rest times, control may still be achievable. Rest pastures as long as possible, reintroduce the lowest-risk groups to your cleanest pastures, and use a more aggressive testing strategy to identify and cull new cases. Decontamination will take longer under these conditions, and you may need to cull heavily or temporarily reduce herd size to achieve control.

Birth areas should be kept free of contamination by infected manure. Prevent young animals from nursing infected mothers, and keep udders of nurse animals clean. As pasteurization may not completely eliminate MAP, use milk and colostrum from Johne's-free sources only. Minimize ingestion of manure—particularly for young animals—by keeping feed off the ground and manure out of water. Graze young stock only on clean pastures, and fence clean animals out of areas that receive infected runoff.

For every two ewes, does or cows that develop clinical signs tomorrow, one already transmitted MAP to her last lambs, kids or calf during gestation. If a brood or dairy animal shows signs of infection, she and her most recent offspring should be culled. This is especially important for sheep and goats, where multiple births facilitate a faster increase in MAP prevalence throughout the herd.

The finer points

Reports vary regarding effectiveness of different disinfectants against MAP. Your best bet is to follow label directions using a product labeled "tuberculocidal." Remove bedding and pre-clean items such as solid floors, water tanks and boots thoroughly to remove all soil, as these disinfectants are deactivated by organic matter. Implement good biosecurity to ensure infected material is not moved to clean areas or to another farm. Finally, implement prevention and monitoring to avoid re-introducing infection.

"Johne's disease is neither treatable nor preventable with vaccine, and must therefore be considered on even the best managed farms"

Jennifer L. Burton, DVM, is a veterinarian and educator with a special interest in the intersection of food animal medicine and public health. She also works as Auditor for A Greener World.

For more information on Johne's disease—and information on many disease management and health and welfare issues for a range of species—visit farmhealthonline.com

FIT OR FAT?

Body Condition Scoring is an important management tool for maintaining animal health and fertility, says Anna Heaton



When carrying out BCS, each type of animal has specific areas you should look at and feel



For sheep and goats, the main area is the backbone in the loin area behind the last rib

Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW standards require farmers and ranchers to maintain all animals at a Body Condition Score of 2 or more, while breeding animals must not exceed a score of 4 (both on a scale of 1 to 5). But what does this mean—and how can Body Condition Scoring be used as a livestock management tool?

What is Body Condition Scoring?

Body Condition Score (BCS) is a measure of an animal's energy reserves (or fat reserves) and muscularity. Animals can lay down fat at times when feed is plentiful and mobilize it when the available feed does not meet their nutritional demands. The aim is not to keep BCS at exactly the same level all the time, as some variation in energy reserves will naturally occur during the production cycle, but to maintain the BCS within expected limits—and to avoid extremes. Although the best live weight for a cow, sheep, goat or pig will vary depending on its breed or age, the optimum BCS is the same for all, making it a useful monitoring tool.

BCS can be used as a measure for individual animals, as well as an indicator of overall herd or flock condition. If there is a wide range of condition scores within the herd or flock—or numerous animals at either the lowest or highest extreme—a whole herd/flock review of nutrition, health and management will be needed.

BCS and fertility

BCS offers a useful indication of an animal's nutritional and health status, so it makes sense that animals with poor BCS will suffer slower growth rates and greater susceptibility to disease or parasite problems. However, BCS is also useful for assessing and predicting fertility.

Research shows that animals with a BCS of less than 2 have little spare energy reserves and are less likely to get pregnant. If they do get pregnant, they are more likely to lose the pregnancy or produce offspring with low birth-weights, and therefore a lower chance of survival. Lactation will also be poor. Similarly, animals with a BCS of 4 or more are also less likely to get pregnant—and if they are pregnant during the time their BCS increases to this level, the developing calf, lamb(s), kid(s) or piglets can grow so large the mother has trouble giving birth. Animals with high BCS can also suffer from leg problems and lameness from the additional stress of their weight and fat levels on their feet and limbs.

Aside from affecting health and welfare, failure to meet expected BCS levels can be costly due to poor animal performance, the extra costs associated with providing veterinary care and wasted money spent on unnecessary feed.

What's involved?

BCS is a simple, practical management tool. With practice, it is possible to assess animals

FROM 1 TO 5 BODY CONDITION SCORING A EWE



Score 1
The loin is thin with no fat cover



Score 2
The loin muscle is a moderate depth but with little fat cover



Score 3
The loin muscle is full with moderate fat cover



Score 4
The loin muscles are full and rounded, and have a thick covering of fat



Score 5
The loin muscles are very full and covered with very thick fat



Feel by applying gentle pressure to establish how much muscle and fat surrounds the bones

quickly and easily. Monitoring BCS allows early management intervention to either start or stop supplemental feeding, treat animals for parasites and other health problems, change pasture rotation and any other actions to keep animals in the right condition.

BCS for pigs, goats and sheep is generally assessed on a scale of 1-to-5, while cattle are assessed on either a 1-to-5 or a 1-to-9 scale. (There is at least one 1-to-9 scale for goats, too.) Several guides are available with example scales and photographs of animals at different scores (see 'Further Information,' right).

While a visual assessment can provide a rough idea of the BCS for cattle or pigs, this is clearly not an option with wool sheep. The most accurate way to carry out BCS for all species is with a combination of visual and physical assessment.

When to carry out BCS

Each type of animal has specific areas you should look at and feel by applying gentle pressure to establish how much muscle and fat surrounds the bones. For cattle, key areas include the tail head, ribs and loin areas; for sows, the backbone and hips; for sheep and goats, the main area is the backbone in the loin area behind the last rib. Depending on species, additional points, such as the shoulders, the ribs and the hip bones, can also be assessed to improve the accuracy of the score. Carrying out BCS at key times in the production



This dairy cow has a BCS 2 and is not meeting the nutritional demands of her body

cycle, such as birthing, weaning and service, will provide a good indication of overall herd or flock condition, particularly at these critical periods. Fortunately, this usually coincides with times when animals are being handled anyway, allowing you to integrate BCS with other management procedures. The key is to get an idea of what the optimum BCS levels are for the different production stages—and to be alert to those animals that fall outside these norms.

Remember: if all you do is look for individual animals that are thinner (or fatter) than their herd mates, the overall herd condition score could be going up or down without you noticing. You will need to assess a reasonable proportion of the herd or flock to really know what is going on.

What if the BCS is too high or too low?

If you find animals at the extremes of body condition levels, it is usually best to temporarily remove them from the herd or flock for special treatment. Never try to change body condition score too rapidly, as sudden changes in feed levels can lead to further problems. But by incorporating regular BCS assessments into your management practices, you should find in the future you only need to tweak nutrition to allow condition to return to optimum levels.

Anna Heaton is Lead Technical Advisor with A Greener World

FURTHER INFORMATION

AssureWel
BCS for beef cattle, dairy cattle, sheep and pigs. See assurewel.org

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
BCS for sheep (1-to-5 scale) and other species. Visit agric.gov.ab.ca and search "body condition"

American Institute for Goat Research
BCS factsheet for goats (1-to-5 scale). Visit luresext.edu and select 'library'

Canadian Pork Producers
BCS for sows (1-to-5 scale); Animal Care Assessment manual (appendix 10). Visit cqqa-aqc.com

Mississippi State University Extension
BCS for cattle (1-to-9 scale). Visit extension.msstate.edu and search "body condition"

NC State Cooperative Extension
BCS for goats (1-to-9 scale). Visit ces.ncsu.edu and search "body condition"

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs
BCS for dairy cattle (1-to-5 scale) and other species. Visit omafra.gov.on.ca and search "body condition"



A WELCOME BOOST

Vaccines can help prevent major disease by priming the immune system

Vaccination, also known as immunization, is a means to create immunity and prevent disease. Vaccines form an important part of the disease prevention program on many farms, and can help reduce reliance on antibiotics and other costly veterinary treatments by minimizing—or even eliminating—the risk of major livestock diseases.

Deciding on whether or not to vaccinate your animals will depend on the disease risks prevalent on your farm and your farming system, and is something you should discuss with your vet. You should include your vaccination strategy in your farm's Animal Health Plan.

Vaccination is achieved by active or passive immunization. The most common example of passive immunization is the transfer of maternal antibodies across the placenta or through colostrum from mother to offspring. Passive immunization provides immediate but short lived protection. The antibodies transferred gradually disappear and are not replaced unless the animal is exposed to disease or vaccinated.

When you carry out vaccination on farm, you are mainly using active immunization. This involves exposing the animal to an antigen at a level where the animal's immune system will respond, but the animal will not get the disease. Active immunity takes longer to develop and most vaccines initially need to be given twice, a few weeks apart, but the protective effect lasts longer. The aim is to create immunologic memory, so if

KEY VACCINES AVAILABLE

- Bovine Viral Diarrhea (BVD)
- Clostridial diseases
- Colibacillosis
- Cryptosporiosis
- Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis (IBR)
- Leptospirosis
- Lungworm
- Mastitis (two strains)
- Pastuerellosis
- Calf pneumonia
- Rotavirus and Coronavirus
- Ringworm
- Salmonellosis

the animal is exposed to the pathogen in the future it produces a heightened immune response that prevents disease developing.

Active immunization may use live attenuated vaccines or killed/inactivated vaccines, both which contain organisms that have been weakened or treated so they lose their pathogenicity but still provoke an immune response.

Vaccines must be stored and administered properly to ensure they are effective. Live attenuated vaccines, for example, must be kept cool but never frozen. Never use a vaccine that is out of date or otherwise compromised. All vaccinating should be carried out by adequately trained staff, and it is vital to administer the vaccine according to the datasheet. Most vaccines must be injected, but some (such as IBR for cattle) may be administered intra-nasally. If injecting, use a clean needle and syringe. Some vaccines must be injected intra-muscularly (directly into the muscle), others subcutaneously (under the skin), and incorrect injection can render the vaccine wholly ineffective. Ensure all animals are vaccinated to adequately protect the herd or flock and, finally, remember to record all vaccinations in the animal medicine book.

Article adapted from Farm Health Online. For more information about practical, science-based advice on high-welfare livestock management, visit farmhealthonline.com

Certification news

THE COMPLIANCE REPORT

Failure to provide correct info is the #1 reason for certification delays, says Tim Holmes

The Auditor's job is to assess your farm for compliance with the Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW standards. After visiting your farm, the Auditor will submit a report to our Compliance Team, who review the audit for accuracy and completeness, before sending it back to you, the farmer, for further action.

If your farm received a Non-Compliance (NC) or Critical Non-Compliance (CNC), your auditor should have discussed the specific issues with you at the end of your audit. But it's very important to understand that NCs and CNCs are actually quite common. It doesn't mean we think your farm is "bad" or poorly managed; it just means your farm does not (yet) comply with the standards, and you'll need to address the specific issues before we can certify (or re-certify) your farm.

After the audit, we'll send you the Compliance Report via email in a spreadsheet format, with various sections (navigable by the tabs at the bottom). If you received any NCs or CNCs, you must provide a clear description of the Corrective Action to be taken and a realistic Estimated Date of Completion before you send the form back

to us. Failure to supply this information is the #1 reason for prolonged, time-consuming, back-and-forth communication between farmers and the program, and lengthy delays in approving applications and issuing you with a certificate—something we all want to avoid!

To save us all time and money, please make sure you have provided detailed, specific information about the Corrective Action you will take, along with a clear deadline that is fair and realistic for the issue identified *before* you return your Compliance Report. (See the two examples below.)

If, for any reason, you can no longer meet the estimated date of completion, get in touch as soon as possible so we can consider an extension. If the issue has **not** been addressed at your re-audit, and you haven't been in touch to explain why, you are at risk of being suspended from the program—or even terminated. That's something we all want to avoid. Thanks in advance for your cooperation and participation in the program.

Tim Holmes is Director of Compliance with A Greener World

Example

CRITICAL NON-COMPLIANCE SPECIES 1			Details of compliance or non-compliance etc	Compliance category	Description of corrective action completed/taken (applicant/member)	Estimated date of completion
Species	Standard	Standard summary				
Layers	8.71	Once in lay, chicken breeder flocks and laying hens must have access to 7 inch aerial perch per bird	The farm currently has a flock of 80 hens with no perches available	CNC	<i>Will put in perches</i>	<i>As soon as possible</i>

An example of our new Compliance Report. If you received any NCs or CNCs, you need to fill in the last two sections (shown in red).

The top example would fail: it does not provide enough information (no details about the number of perches and the timeframe is too vague).

The lower example would pass: it lists how much perch space the farmer will add and the location; the timeframe is also specific, fair and realistic.

Compliance category	Description of corrective action completed/taken (applicant/member)	Estimated date of completion
CNC	<i>Adding 560 inches of perch space to the roost area</i>	<i>15 December: two weeks from the date of this report</i>

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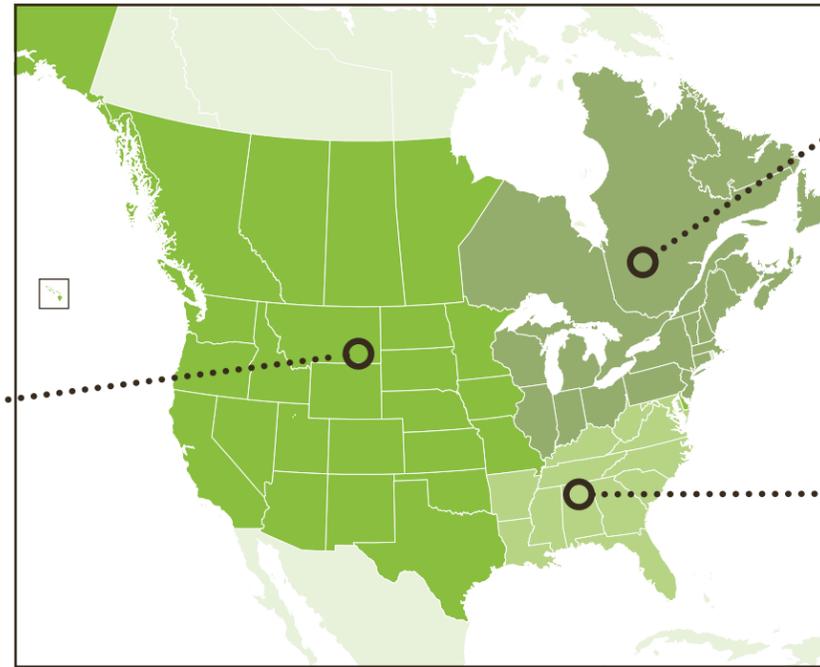
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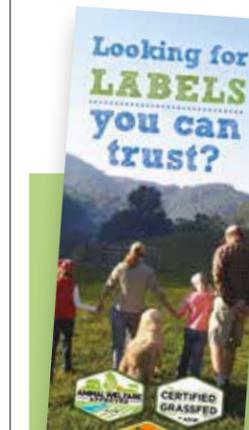
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Meet the farmer

HAPPY MEADOWS

Since he was a teen, Michael David Smith has trialed various agricultural production systems. Today, he raises Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW laying hens and Certified Grassfed by AGW sheep at Ferme au bonheur des prés in the eastern region of Québec, Canada.

Why AGW certification?

I read about and attended workshops on grassfed production, permaculture and carbon farming, and weaned my flock from grain while building an intensive pasture rotation system. I learned about AGW from another certified lamb producer in Québec. Animal welfare is very important to my customer base, so I decided to apply.

Describe a typical day in your life

A typical day begins at 5.30 a.m. I climb the hill and move the flock to their new pasture for the day. I check the animals, give the guard donkey a good scratch, and move the water and mineral bins. I move the portable electric fence to the next section of pasture. Then, I have breakfast!

Depending on the time of year, the rest of my morning would consist of running errands, small repairs, returning phone calls or paperwork. In the afternoon, I (sometimes) have a short nap, then cut brush and windfall along the perimeter fences, work on new fence lines, maintain and repair machinery and cut weeds in the fields.

Sustainable farming principles: why do they matter?

From a practical point of view, if we don't apply sustainable farming principles, we probably won't have much to farm in the future! From a financial point of view, and based on my personal experience, sustainable farming can ultimately make us significantly more profitable.

Who are your customers?

I sell directly to the public via the internet and at local farmers' markets from June through October. We also sell from the farm year-round.

What are your business plans?

Continue to build my flock's genetics and prepare the farm for a transition to an Agricultural Land Trust. I plan to remove my farm land from speculation, make it available to new sustainable farmers and protect its sustainable status in perpetuity.

What do you love most about what you do?

I love to be outside, to plant things and to watch them grow. Lambing season is by far my favorite; it is a joy, miracle and hope for the future all rolled into one. The occasional lambing season heart-break reminds me of the importance of respecting nature and working with her as closely as possible.

What do you find most frustrating about what you do?

Modern agriculture is seriously endangering our planet and our ability to thrive upon it. After 13 years of study, practical experimentation and learning, I realize that we now know how to produce healthier food, humanely and simultaneously reverse climate change. Given the current Industrial Agricultural Complex, it is very difficult to convince others in agriculture at all levels to implement the systems necessary to turn the tide.

Who or what is your biggest inspiration?

All of the small, family-scale farms across the world dedicated to producing better food and healing the planet that continue in spite of the immense challenges, and who—regardless of the time and energy constraints—openly share their experiences with others.



AT A GLANCE

Farm: Ferme au bonheur des prés, Ayer's Cliff, Québec, Canada
Certification/date: Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW (laying hens and sheep) and Certified Grassfed by AGW (sheep) since 2014
Size: 220 acres
Soil type: Stoney loam
Altitude: 1,240 ft
Annual rainfall: 43.3 inches
Enterprises: Texel, Dorper, mixed Texel/Dorper/Western Red sheep. Mixed-breed chickens. Selling Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW chicken eggs and Certified Grassfed by AGW lamb.

Find out more at aubonheurdespres.com

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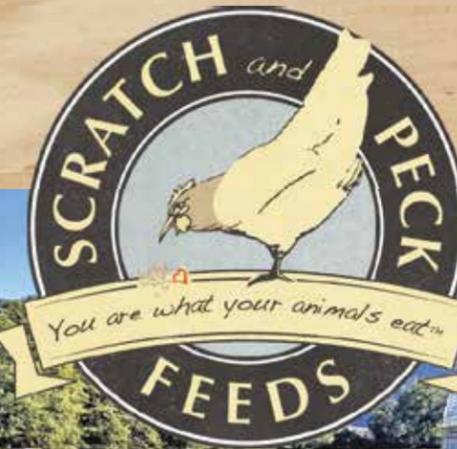
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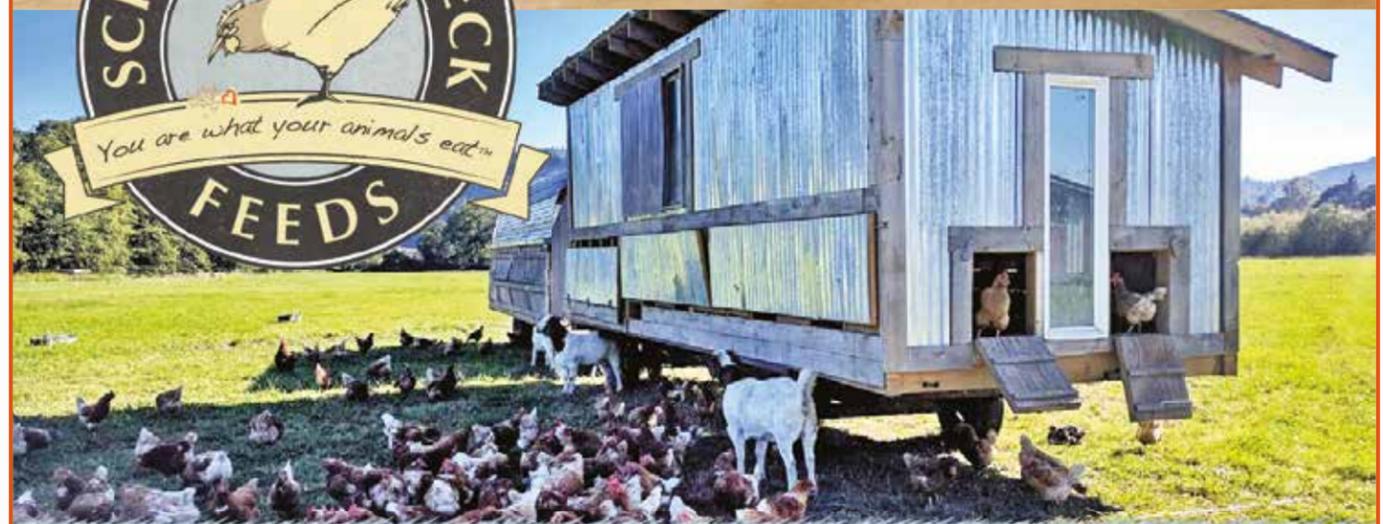


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