GRASS-BASED DAIRY: LOW INPUT, HIGH VALUE

July 19, 2012
Presentation Outline

• Technical Orientation
• NGFN Overview

Jeff Farbman
*Wallace Center at Winrock International*

• All About Managed Grazing
• Pastured Dairy Case Study
• Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship
• Questions and Answers
• Upcoming Opportunities, etc.
NATIONAL GOOD FOOD NETWORK

Moving more good food to more people
NATIONAL GOOD FOOD NETWORK: VISION
NATIONAL GOOD FOOD NETWORK: GOALS

Supply Meets Demand
• There is abundant good food (healthy, green, fair and affordable) to meet demands at the regional level.

Information Hub
• The National Good Food Network (NGFN) is the go to place for regional food systems stories, methods and outcomes.

Policy Change
• Policy makers are informed by the results and outcomes of the NGFN and have enacted laws or regulation which further the Network goals.
SAMPLE OF CURRENT INITIATIVES

• NGFN Food Hub Collaboration
  http://foodhub.info

• Field Guide to the New American Foodshed
  http://foodshedguide.org

• Business and Financial Skills Training in the South

• Monthly Webinars
NATIONAL GOOD FOOD NETWORK: VISION
NATIONAL GOOD FOOD NETWORK: LOCATIONS
NATIONAL GOOD FOOD NETWORK

www.ngfn.org
contact@ngfn.org

... and for the Food Hub Collaboration:

www.foodhub.info
contact@foodhub.info
Presentation Outline

- Technical Orientation
- NGFN Overview
- Managed Grazing: A Triple Bottom Line Business
  
  **Laura Paine**  
  *Grazing & Organic Agriculture Specialist*  
  *Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection*

- Pastured Dairy Case Study
- Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship
- Questions and Answers
- Upcoming Opportunities, etc.
Grass-Based Dairy: High value, low input

Laura Paine
Grazing & Organic Agriculture Specialist
WI Dept. Agriculture
PO Box 8911
Madison, WI 53708
608-224-5120
Laura.paine@wi.gov

National Good Food Network, July 19, 2012
The triple bottom line

Managed grazing is...

- Economically sound
- Environmentally friendly
- Supportive of rural communities
  - Compatible with population centers.
  - Local business development (meat and dairy processing)
  - Local food initiatives
Management intensive grazing

- 30 days
- 1 paddock

Rest-Rotation Continuum

- 30 days
- 30 paddocks

- Higher quality
- Higher yield
- More diversity
- More flexibility
Managed grazing works economically

- Chasing production doesn’t always work
- Reduce cost of production—more money in your pocket
- Can a market for grass-fed products encourage more people to graze?
Managed grazing reduces soil erosion on livestock farms

Soil Erosion

Pasture 2006  Pasture 2007  Rusle2 model--pasture

Dairy cropping system  Row crop system

Sediment losses from Breneman outwintering pastures

Managed grazing reduces soil erosion on livestock farms

Pasture 2006  Pasture 2007  Rusle2 model--pasture

Dairy cropping system  Row crop system

Sediment losses from Breneman outwintering pastures
Role of forages in wildlife habitat

![Graph showing changes in acres of forages, rowcrops, and Western Meadowlark populations over time.](image)
Grazing Modifies Grassland Bird Habitat

Total # of Birds

Grazed Vegetation Height

- 0 - 4"
- 4" - 8"
- 9" - 12"
- >12"
- Idle

Horned Lark
Upland Sandpiper
Grasshopper Sparrow
Eastern Meadowlark
Bobolink
Henslow’s Sparrow
Sedge Wren
Protecting water quality and wildlife habitats
Well-managed grazing systems can be part of the solution

- Control Soil Erosion
- Protect Water Quality
- High Quality Wildlife Habitat

Delivering Ecosystem Services
Fostering conservation with market development
Grazing as economic development
WI DATCP Grass-based farming Initiatives

For most farmers, the middle part of the supply chain is a big unknown.
Few farmers have the capacity, time, or interest in direct marketing.
Our goals are to create structures whereby they can pool resources to access premium markets.
Market development and a premium for grass-fed milk and meat.
How big is the market?

• No ‘grass-fed buyer’ profile available
  – Organic/natural/local food buyers?
    • Motivated by health concerns
    • Motivated by environmental concerns
  – Specialty/Artisan shoppers
    • Flavor and quality important
    • Uniqueness, story behind the product

• Promising demographics:
  – More affluent, well-educated consumers
  – “Boomers”
SARE Research Project
2008-2012

- Can we establish a market for grass-fed milk as a ‘specialty ingredient’ for artisan dairy products?
  - Research to compare the chemistry of grass-fed milk and conventional milk—what makes it taste different?
  - Consumer preference research on specific products—how do consumers like it in cheese vs butter?
  - Culinary performance: how do these products behave in different foods?
  - Market assessment: is there enough interest in the dairy processing industry to establish a grass-fed milk pool and provide a premium for graziers?
“Terroir”

Animals

Plants

Soil

Unique flavors
Research and Market Development

- Comparisons
  - Grass-fed vs. conventional stored feeds.
  - Seasonal variation
    - Spring flush
    - Summer
    - Fall
Dairy farm partnership (two families) in SW WI.
Use only their own milk.
Researched Alpine cheese types to develop their own recipe.
Make one type of cheese: Pleasant Ridge Reserve.
Won Grand Champion at American Cheese Society their 1st year.
Scaling up:
Edelweiss Graziers Cooperative
Can grass-based dairy be an economic development strategy for rural communities?

• Pasture based dairying
  – A 250 acre pasture based dairy can generate an annual income of $225,000.
  – 60 to 100 cows can provide a comfortable living for a farm family.
  – A farm that is compatible with urban development.

• A dairy farm generates
  – $15,000 to $17,000 in economic activity per cow in the local community.

• Dairy processing plants provide jobs and generate revenue for rural communities.
• Participants
  – UW Extension & UW CALS
  – WI Dept. Ag (DATCP).
  – WI Economic Development Corporation.

• Activities
  – Education.
  – Technical assistance.
  – Small grants to farmers
  – Tax credits.
  – Low interest loans.

• Non-profit group supported by DATCP.

• Consultant teams.
  – Business planning
  – Equipment.
  – Recipes.
  – Marketing
  – Label development.

• Assisting farmers and existing processors.

Resources for Food Artisans
Marketing and Value-Added Grant Programs

• USDA
  – Value-Added Producer Grant
  – Farmers Market Promotion grants
  – SARE Producer grant program

• State Departments of Agriculture
  – Federal State Market Development Program
  – Specialty crops block grants
  – Specific to Wisconsin
    • Ag Development and Diversification grants
    • Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grants
    • Producers First grants
Additional Tools

- **Got Moolah:**
  

- **University Extension**
  - Traditional small business development assistance
  - Ag Innovation Counselors

- **Local Economic Development Resources**
  - Tax incremental financing
  - Revolving loan funds
  - “Ag Development Zones”

- **Private investment possibilities**
  - Angel Investment networks
  - Badger Ag Vest (Wisconsin)
  - Slow Money
Additional Information

• Managed grazing information: http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Grazing-C19.aspx
• Grass-dairy research video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6-Y-E5UD0o
• Dairy Business Innovation Center: http://www.dbicusa.org/
• WI Dairy Artisan Network http://www.wisconsindairyartisan.com/
• Economic Impact of Agriculture: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/ag/wisag/
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Pastured Dairy Case Study & Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship

Joe Tomandl
Dairy Farmer, and Program Director
Grass Works Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship

- Questions and Answers
- Upcoming Opportunities, etc.
Pathway To Farm Ownership

Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship

* 4000hrs paid training over 2 years
* 3712hrs on the job training
* 288hrs paid related instruction
Pathway To Farm Transfer

Average age of Farmers is 55

What are their options to exiting the industry?
The Program

3712 hours of on the job training
  - Guided by the job book

288 hours related instruction
  - UW SBDLF
  - Soils-NWTC
  - Dairy Nutrition Seminar-NTC
  - Milk Quality Seminar-NTC
  - Dairy Health Seminar-NTC
  - Holistic Management
Outcomes

APPRENTICE

- Ability to develop skills to own or operate a grazing dairy
- Networked with Dairy industry
- Access to opportunities to
  - Manage a Grazing Dairy
  - Earn equity in cattle
  - Transition a dairy
Funding

United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
RESULTS

What if:

We could retain or increase the number of family sized dairy farms?
Questions and Answers

Laura Paine
Wisconsin Dept of Ag
Laura.paine@wi.gov
608-224-5120

Joe Tomandl
Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship
cjtom@hughes.net
715-560-0389

Jeff Farbman
Wallace Center at Winrock International
contact@ngfn.org
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- Walk to Manage, Plan to Succeed
- Questions and Answers
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Webinars are Archived

TOPICS!

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3:30p EST (12:30p PST)

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