

UNH Researcher Will Discuss Climate and Land Use at Organic Farmers Conference

Keynote Address to Feature Overview of UNH's Composting and Energy Recovery Efforts

Friday, February 27, 2015

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[John Aber](#), professor of natural resources at the University of New Hampshire and researcher with the [N.H. Agricultural Experiment Station](#), will discuss future climate and land use scenarios and provide an overview of UNH's innovative composting and energy capture facility in his keynote address at the [Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association](#) Spring Growth Conference Saturday, March 7.

The conference will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Common Ground Education Center in Unity, Maine. Aber's keynote address begins at 10 a.m. It will be followed by a question and answer session.

Aber will discuss the challenges of climate variability and land use change, with particular attention to future climate and land use scenarios in the context of the [Wildlands and Woodlands](#) and [Food Solutions New England](#) organizations' visions. He also will discuss ways to increase the efficiency and lower the cost of milk and vegetable production, providing an overview of UNH's high-tech composting and energy recovery facility at the UNH Organic Dairy Research Farm, part of the N.H. Agricultural Experiment Station. UNH is the only university in the nation using this cutting-edge energy recovery composting system.

"New England's food system is changing rapidly," Aber says. "Consumer demand for local, sustainably grown food is increasing. The climate system is changing. There are increasing demands for different uses on a fixed land base. To meet these challenges, we need innovative ways to produce food — methods that increase production while also reducing the environmental impact of agriculture."

A member of the UNH faculty since 1987, Aber has coordinated UNH's the cross-college program in environmental science, chaired the Ph.D. program in natural resources and earth system science, and served as vice president for research and public service, as well as provost and vice president of academic affairs. In 2013, he returned his full attention to teaching and research, focusing on the sustainability of UNH's innovative Organic Dairy Research Farm.

He received a Northeast SARE Agroecosystem Research and Education grant "A Closed System Energy Independent Organic Dairy Farm for Northeast U.S." This led to subsequent grants from the NH Agricultural Experiment Station for a study on "Closing Nutrient and Energy Budgets on a New England Organic Dairy Farm: A Wood-Bedding-Compost System." He is also involved in a study of "An Integrated System for Providing Bedding and Energy Using On-Farm Forest Resources and an Experimental Aerobic Composting System."

Aber has hundreds of publications to his credit, including coauthoring the three books: *Terrestrial Ecosystems*, *Forests in Time: The Environmental Consequences of 1000 Years of Change in New England* and *The Sustainable Learning Community*.

- WRITTEN BY:

[Michelle Morrissey '97](#) | UNH Donor Communications
| michelle.morrissey@unh.edu | 603-862-0527



University of New Hampshire

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