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## UNH Organic Dairy Research Farm Strikes Gold for Milk Quality

Monday, February 18, 2019

(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/2019/02/18/UNH-ORGANIC-DAIRY-RESEARCH-FARM-STRIKES-GOLD-FOR-MILK-QUALITY)

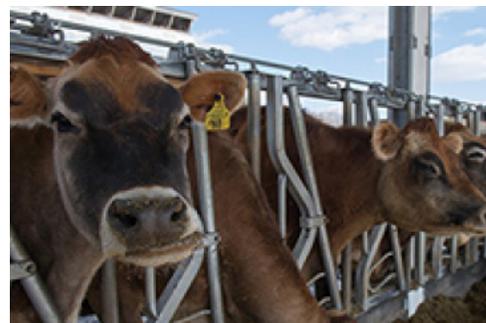
DURHAM, N.H.—The Organic Dairy Research Farm, a facility of the NH Agricultural Experiment Station (<http://colsa.unh.edu/nhaes/>) at the University of New Hampshire, has received a 2018 Gold Quality Award for outstanding milk quality from the Organic Valley Cooperative for the second year in a row.

The national award program honors organic dairy farmers who produce milk of the highest quality. Nominees are evaluated on their systems of monitoring udder health, milking routine, protocols for detection and treatment of clinical and subclinical cases, treatment protocols, and strategies for overall herd health and welfare.

In the last two years, the Organic Dairy Research Farm has increased organic milk production by nearly 127,000 pounds as a result of management practices implemented by the farm’s manager Ryan Courtright, who joined the farm in April 2017. A dairy farmer originally from Pennsylvania, Courtright has improved management practices and reduced feed costs at the farm.

“Our farm produces some of the highest quality organic milk in the country,” said Jon Wraith, director of the NH Agricultural Experiment Station and dean of the UNH College of Life Sciences and Agriculture. “Our dairy manager, staff, and students are committed to using the most effective and efficient organic dairy management practices so that our research farm can be a model for organic producers nationally. Their care for our herd ensures our cows are among the healthiest in the nation.”

To receive the Gold Quality Award, the organic dairy achieved an average somatic cell count of less than 100,000. Dairy herds with a low somatic cell count tend to be more profitable herds since they have reduced treatment and veterinary costs for mastitis, which is the most common and costliest disease for dairy cattle, higher milk production per cow, and higher milk quality premiums. As a result of receiving the award, UNH is paid the highest price for its organic milk. Milk from the organic dairy goes to the Organic Valley Cooperative, America’s largest cooperative of organic farmers, representing more than 2,000 organic farms in 34 states, Canada and Australia.



JERSEY COWS AT THE ORGANIC DAIRY RESEARCH FARM EAT GRAIN AT A FEEDING STATION.

The first of its kind at a land-grant university in the nation, the Organic Dairy Research Farm is home to about 100 registered Jersey cows, heifers, and calves and is managed as an integrated agro-ecosystem that includes the biological, physical and human-related components. A primary focus of the farm is to undertake relevant research to serving the organic dairy community. Areas of study include dairy nutrition and feeds, pasture quality, forage production, compost production, and management of the associated streams, soils, woodlands, and other natural resources.

Founded in 1887, the NH Agricultural Experiment Station (<http://colsa.unh.edu/nhaes>) at the UNH College of Life Sciences and Agriculture (<https://colsa.unh.edu/>) is UNH's original research center and an elemental component of New Hampshire's land-grant university heritage and mission.

The University of New Hampshire inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top-ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. As one of the nation's highest-performing research universities, UNH partners with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, and receives more than \$110 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

#### Editor's Notes:

#### PHOTOS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD

<https://colsa.unh.edu/nhaes/sites/default/files/media/images/odrf2018.jpg> (<https://colsa.unh.edu/nhaes/sites/default/files/media/images/odrf2018.jpg>)

An overview of the Organic Dairy Research Farm, a facility of the NH Agricultural Experiment Station (<http://colsa.unh.edu/nhaes/>) at the University of New Hampshire College of Life Sciences and Agriculture.

<https://colsa.unh.edu/nhaes/sites/colsa.unh.edu.nhaes/files/media/images/unhordf.jpg>  
(<https://colsa.unh.edu/nhaes/sites/colsa.unh.edu.nhaes/files/media/images/unhordf.jpg>)

Jersey cows at the Organic Dairy Research Farm eat grain at a feeding station.

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