

The Northeast Cooperative Council



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cooperative notes

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FORUM FOCUSES ON "STIMULATING INNOVATION" and RAILEX TOUR

The Northeast Cooperative Council held its Cooperative Leaders Forum and 59th Annual Meeting on March 11-12 at the Marriott Hotel in Albany, N.Y. The Forum was co-sponsored by CoBANK and Cornell Cooperative Extension. There was also be a pre-conference tour of the RAILEX produce, unit train warehouse operation in Rotterdam, N.Y.

Richard Lewis kicked off the Forum with an address on "Global Market Strategies." Lewis is the Chief Executive Officer of DairyAmerica, Inc. headquartered in Fresno, Calif., a federated marketing association of nine producer-owned dairy cooperatives. DA supplies quality dairy products regionally, nationally and internationally to its ever expanding and diverse customer base. Members include: Agri-Mark, Inc., California Dairies, Inc., Land of Lakes, Inc., Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Association, O-AT-KA Milk Products, Inc., United Dairymen of Arizona, Dairy Farmers of

America and Lone Star Milk Producers. DA markets 100 percent of the milk powder produced by members. Products include: nonfat dry milk, buttermilk and whole milk powders.

Dr. Arthur DeGaetano discussed "Changing Weather for the Northeast." DeGaetano is an Associate Professor and Director of the Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University www.nrcc.cornell.edu/. He is a faculty member in the Dept. of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences in Cornell. His research and scholarship focus on: enhancing the use and utility of climate data and information in weather sensitive decisions, development of methods by which the existing climatological record can be used as a problem-solving tool or to enhance decision making.

Dr. Robert Thompson presented an "Economic Outlook." Professor Thompson holds the Gardner Chair in Agricultural Policy at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, where he carries on an active program of classroom and extension education in public policy. He serves on the USDA- USTR Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee for Trade and as Chairman of the International Food and Agricultural Trade Policy

Council. He has held previous positions as Director of Rural Development and Senior Advisor for Agricultural Trade Policy at the World Bank; President and CEO of Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development and Dean of Agriculture at Purdue University.

Andrew Razeghi addressed the subject of "Where Innovative Ideas Come From." Andrew Razeghi works with organizations seeking growth through the creation and introduction of new ideas. His work spans industries – from consumer packaged goods to healthcare, tourism to media and non-profit organizations to professional sports teams. He is the founder of The Andrew Razeghi Companies, LLC. He is also an Adjunct Associate Professor at The Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University and has taught the capstone MBA course on strategy and organization at The Graduate School of Business at Loyola University Chicago.

The afternoon program was followed by a reception hosted by CoBANK directors. At the annual banquet, Roy Orton, who retired as Chairman of CoBANK, was honored for his many years of service to cooperatives in the Northeast and across the U.S. Speakers who praised Roy for his efforts included, Patrick Hooker



President's Column

As incoming NECC President, I'd like to start off by thanking Sandy Stauffer for his dedicated and very capable leadership as President of NECC over the last two years. Under Sandy's leadership NECC undertook a strategic planning initiative that reaffirmed our commitment to serving directors and future cooperative leaders. Going forward one of our challenges will be to build upon the thoughts and ideas surfaced during this process to strengthen our organization. Again, thanks to Sandy for leading this effort. In today's hectic world we all wear many hats – Sandy's willingness to take on responsibilities with various Boards, including NECC, while running a large dairy operation shows his dedication and commitment to cooperatives and Northeast Agriculture.

The recent 2008 Annual Meeting and Cooperative Leader's Forum held in Albany, N.Y. was another success. Hats off to Brian Henehan for the work he does year in and year out to make this Forum an event those in the cooperative world look forward to attending each year. The quality of speakers helped build upon NECC's well deserved reputation of putting together a top quality program. The diversity, knowledge and expertise of the presenters helped provide something of value for everyone. The opportunity to get together and network with your peers also appeared to be enjoyed by all. Please mark your calendars for March XX in Albany, N.Y. for next years Forum for what I'm sure will be another great program.

Following the evening annual banquet we were fortunate to be able to recognize Roy Orton for his many years of dedicated service and strong leadership to agriculture and the cooperative world. The after dinner speakers did an admirable job of paying tribute to him and Roy's comments were particularly enjoyable.

Thank you for your continued support of the Council. As always, if you have comments or suggestions for us, feel free to contact me or any of the other Board members. It will be my pleasure to serve you over the next two years.

Will
Will Baildon



RAILEX Tour

NECC sponsored a pre-conference tour of Railex, LLC before the Council Annual Meeting and Leaders Forum. The New York Railex distribution center and warehouse is located in the Rotterdam Industrial Park in Rotterdam, N.Y. Railex operates the only express perishable, produce unit trains in North America. The train is comprised of specially designed cars with state-of-the-art GPS and temperature monitoring technology.

Twenty individuals attended the tour. A number of NECC member cooperatives were represented on the tour including: Dairylea Cooperative, Dairy Farmers of America, First Pioneer Farm Credit, Upstate Niagara Cooperative, O-AT-KA Milk Products Cooperative and National Grape Cooperative. Other organizations, businesses or agencies in the tour group included: Cornell University, Blue Hill at Stone Barns, Northeast Milk Marketing Order Administrator, NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County and Finger Lakes Organic Growers Cooperative.

The group was hosted by Railex management and staff including: Andrew M. Pollak, CEO; Debbie Trock, Human Resources, Jonathon Trock, Paul Esposito, Senior V.P. of Sales and Logistics and William L. Collins, General Manager.



← **Andy Pollak and Todd Schmit** pleased with the turnout.



Andy Pollak discusses detail with **Eric Zuber**. →

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the Commissioner of Agriculture for New York State, Tom Davenport with National Grape Cooperatives and Sheldon Brown, a farmer-director from New York who served with Roy



on the CoBANK Board.

The Forum continued on Wednesday morning with two presentations on "The Decision to Merge" by Dan Wolf and Dudley Chaffee. Wolf reviewed the merger between Upstate Farms Cooperative and Niagara Milk Producers. He also participated on the panel discussion on Cooperative Governance. He and his wife, Nancy, and their oldest son, John operate a 300-cow dairy farm and farm over 1,000 acres. Dan has been a delegate of Upstat Niagara Cooperative, Inc., and its predecessors since 1980. He was first elected as a Director of the Cooperative in 1984. He was elected President of Upstate Farms Cooperative, Inc. in 2001, and is now President of the merged Upstate

Niagara Cooperative, Inc. He also is a past president of NECC.

Dudley Chaffee also reviewed the merger between Niagara Milk Producers and Upstate Farms Cooperative. Chaffee with his wife, Ruth, own and operate Chaffee Farms in picturesque Barker, N.Y. He is currently serving as Councilman for the Town of Somerset, is a past President of Niagara Milk Cooperative, Inc. and is currently Vice President of Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc. Dudley also is a Director for O-AT-KA Milk Products, and serves as Treasurer.

Roy Orton, Dan Wolf and Brian Henehan shared their "Observations on Cooperative Governance." Roy is owner of Orton farms, a fruit farm in Ripley, N.Y. He has been a member of National Grape Cooperative for almost 50 years. He has over 35 years of extensive experience as a cooperative board member serving on the various boards including: the National Grape Cooperative, Welch Foods, Springfield Bank for Cooperatives, as well as CoBANK.

He has served as Chairman of Welch Foods and most recently, CoBANK. He has also served on the boards of several national organizations

including the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives and the Farm Credit Council. **Henehan** serves as Director of the Cooperative Enterprise Program in the Dept. of Applied Economics at Cornell University. He is a Senior Extension Associate in the Dept. of Applied Economics where he conducts applied research and develops educational programs on cooperative business administration and governance. He has studied cooperative decision making, marketing and finance, as well as, engaged in Extension and outreach programming for over 25 years. He also serves as Secretary of the Northeast Cooperative Council.

The forum wrapped up with round table discussions for directors and managers. In these sessions leaders from across the Northeast discussed current issues and shared strategies. ■



EVENTS

NECC Future Leaders Conference being planned for 2009.

NECC Board of Directors meeting on Thursday, August 7 at 11:00 a.m. at the Dairyleas headquarters in Syracuse, N.Y.

11th Annual Farmer Cooperatives Conference to be held on November 18-19 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in St. Paul, MN for more information see www.uwcc.wisc.edu/farmercoops08

National Society for Accountants of Cooperatives, NSAC will hold its annual meeting on August 5-6 in St. Louis, Mo. at the Hilton Ball Park Hotel. For more information see www.nsac.coop/events-upcoming.php

NECC Cooperative Leaders Forum and Annual Meeting

February 25-26, 2009 co-sponsored by CoBANK in Albany, N.Y. For more information, contact Brian Henehan at 607-255-8800 or bmh5@cornell.edu