The Northeast Cooperative Council

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Cooperative Feed Dealers ................................ Conklin, N.Y.
Dairy Farmers of America .................. East Syracuse, N.Y.
Dairylea Cooperative Inc .................... East Syracuse, N.Y.
Dairy One ......................................................... Ithaca, N.Y.
Farm Credit of Maine, ACA ............. Auburn, Maine
Farm Credit East ................................. Enfield, Conn.
Genes Cooperative, Inc. ................. Ithaca, N.Y.
Lowville Farmers Cooperative, Inc. ......... Lowville, N.Y.
National Grape Cooperative Association, Inc. ....... Westfield, N.Y.
New York State Rural Electric Association ........... Hartwick, N.Y.
O-AT-KA Milk Products Cooperative Inc .. Batavia, N.Y.
Pro-Fac Cooperative ................................ Rochester, N.Y.
St. Albans Cooperative ...................... St. Albans, Vt.
Stamford Farmers Cooperative .......... Stamford, N.Y.
Upstate Niagara Cooperative ............ Buffalo, N.Y.
Yankeetown Farm Credit, ACA .......... Williston, Vt.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Jeffrey Fetters .......................... Solarca, Shulman, Cohen, Fetters & Burstein PC . . . . . . . . Syracuse, N.Y.
Noemi Gizspenc .................. Cooperative Development Institute ........ Greenfield, Mass.
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Jay McWatters ...................... Dopkins and Co., LLP ......... Williamsville, N.Y.
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Cooperative Notes

FORUM Focuses on “Contemporary Issues”

The Northeast Cooperative Council will hold its Cooperative Leaders Forum and 62nd Annual Meeting on March 27-28 at the Doubletree Hotel in Syracuse, N.Y. The Forum will be held in conjunction with the regional customer meeting of CoBank.

Jeff Lakner will kick off the Forum on Tuesday with an address on “Cooperative Strategies for a Global Market.” Lakner is a farmer director serving on the board of South Dakota Wheat Growers. Lakner has been a member of the Wheat Growers board for 6 years, and farms 2500 acres of corn, soybeans and hay in Westington, S.D. He is a fourth generation farmer who has farmed for nearly 40 years. Jeff was the recipient of the 2011 Farmer Cooperative Director of the Year Award from the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, NCFC. At the award ceremony, NCFC President and CEO Chuck Conner commented “He has provided the Wheat Growers board with outstanding leadership and foresight, and has shown a strong commitment to the wider farmer cooperative community as well as promoting the co-op model.”

Brian Henehan will offer “Observations on Successful Cooperatives.” Henehan is a Senior Extension Associate in the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University. His applied research focuses on agribusiness management and marketing. He serves as program leader for the Cooperative Enterprise Program and is responsible for developing and delivering an educational program for senior management, directors, members, and staff of cooperative businesses as well as conducting applied research on cooperative organizational behavior, marketing and decision making. He will be retiring as NECC Secretary and Senior Extension Associate in the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University in June.

Dr. Marc Russell will present an “Economic Outlook.” Rosell is a former CNBC Chief Economist and Co-Host of SQUAWK BOX. He electrifies audiences nationwide, speaking on the nexus of economics, politics, culture and the media. Her animated style was honed when she served as the popular, lively Chief Economist for CNBC in the months immediately following September 11th. She takes complex economic issues, often dull in the button-down business press, and makes them relevant to people’s lives, families, and careers. Prior to her career in broadcast journalism, Marc Russell served as Corporate Economist and Investment Spokesperson for OppenheimerFunds, one of the nation’s largest mutual fund companies. Before moving to Wall Street, she was an expert witness for Deloitte and Touche in court cases involving economic issues. Marc began her career as an economist with the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. She is currently a visiting professor at DePaul University. Marc Russell earned a PhD in economics from Southern Methodist University, where she was named one of the Young Alumni of the Year in 2002. She brings a world of experience—from Main Street to Wall Street—when discussing the U.S. economy, international events, and movements.

John Hofmeister will address the subject of “How the U.S. Achieves Both Energy Security and Affordability.” John Hofmeister, Founder and CEO Citizens for Affordable Energy and former CEO of Shell Oil Company, the Texas-based subsidiary of Royal Dutch Shell, one of the largest oil companies in the world. Shell has about 22,000 employees and approximately 25,000 branded gas stations in the United States. He also has held leadership roles at General Electric, Northern and AlliedSignal.

After retiring from Shell in 2008, Mr. Hofmeister founded Citizens for Affordable Energy, a national not-for-profit organization promoting sound U.S. energy policies and public education on energy issues. In addition, he is the author of Why We Hate the Oil Companies: Straight Talk from an Energy Insider. Today, he is also chairman of the National Urban League and a member of the U.S. Department of Energy’s Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technical Advisory Committee.

The Tuesday afternoon program will be followed by a reception hosted by CoBank directors. The program for the evening annual banquet will include celebrations of the careers of Brian Henehan and Bob Egerton who are both retiring.
“CONTEMPORARY ISSUES” continued

The Forum will continue on Wednesday morning with a presentation by Mark Piper on “Taking Milk to the World.” Piper is Vice President for Sourcing, Fonterra (USA) Inc. He was born and raised in New Zealand and spent a number of years moving around the country as his parents ran various hotels and wineries across New Zealand. At 19 Mark joined the New Zealand Dairy Group (which later became part of Fonterra) and in the 19 years Mark has been with Fonterra he has worked in the manufacture of casein and cheese, coordinated Supply Chain activities for sales into Japan and Korea, managed a Technical team for Fonterra Japan, served as Product Group Manager for Fonterra’s global cheese business and now resides in Chicago focusing on the Sourcing of US dairy products for domestic supply and export. Mark also plays ice hockey and inline hockey (like ice hockey but on wheels) and was fortunate enough to represent New Zealand in inline hockey for 5 years, including playing at 2 world Championships.

Professor Max Pfeffer will address “Creating Knowledge with a Public Purpose.” He serves as Associate Dean for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University. His research program and graduate student advising are focused on two main areas of specialization within sociology: 1) the sociology of labor markets with a special emphasis on rural areas and immigrant workers and 2) environmental sociology with an emphasis on land use policy and management. His objectives are to inform local, state and national academic debates and policy discussions through the application of sociological knowledge in these areas. Target audiences include citizens, policy makers and academics. His research spans several areas including land use and environmental planning, rural labor markets, rural to urban and international migration. The empirical work covers a variety of rural and urban communities, including rural/urban fringe areas. Research sites include rural New York, Mexico and Central America, and Brazil. In New York State, his applied research has informed decision making in communities, for state as well as federal policy, agencies, and legislative priorities. Specific areas of outreach include the integration of minorities into social and economic life in New York communities, watershed management, protected area management, and land use planning.

The forum will wrap up with round table discussions for directors and managers. These sessions have become very popular and allow leaders from across the Northeast to discuss current issues and share strategies. For more information on the meeting schedule or registration for the conference, visit the following website: http://cooperatives.dyson.cornell.edu/ or contact Brian Henehan at 607/255-8800 or e-mail bhm5@cornell.edu.

EVENTS

National Council of Farmer Cooperatives Annual Meeting
February 2-3, 2012 in Naples, Fla. For more information, contact NCFC at 202-626-8700 or at their website: http://www.ncfc.org/2012-annual-meeting.html

NECC Cooperative Leaders Forum and Annual Meeting
March 27-28, 2012 in conjunction with CoBank’s regional customer meeting at the Doubletree Hotel in Syracuse, N.Y. For more information and online registration visit www.cooperatives.cornell.edu/necc or contact Brian Henehan at bhm5@cornell.edu.

NECC Board of Directors
Breakfast meeting on March 27 at 7:00 a.m. at the Doubletree Hotel in Syracuse, N.Y.

AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH CORNELL

When the NECC board of directors met on the Cornell campus in December, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Council and the College of Ag. and Life Sciences, Cornell Cooperative Extension as well as the Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management was signed. The MOU renews the current agreement that expires on June 30, 2012. The extended three year agreement spells out the activities that the College and Dyson School will undertake related to education and research on cooperative enterprise. These activities include assisting the Council in offering educational programs, developing an undergraduate class on cooperative strategy and management, as well as offering a learning experience that emphasizes solutions to the priority business issues facing today’s cooperative leaders.

President’s Column

As 2011 comes to a close I am sure there are those amongst us that are glad to see it go. The Dickens line, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,” probably applies pretty well depending on where you live and what sector of agriculture you are involved in. For our cooperatives it seems we must always be aware of attacks, that come out of nowhere, on Capper-Volstead that threaten our ability to work together that we have enjoyed for many years. Presently there is the law suit against CWT for herd retirement on how it affected milk supply. Then, the first week of December a judge ruled that potato cooperatives paying farms to cut planted acres was a violation under cooperative law. It is actions like this that prove what we do at NECC to educate and promote the cooperative culture are vital going forward.

The NECC board has worked hard to keep our relation with Cornell intact and grow our program. On December 12-13, 2011 we were able to renew the MOU with the Dyson School of Business and CALS. I would like to thank Dean Boor for making it possible as well as Loren Tauer, Todd Schmit and Brian Henehan for all their work. With the agreement they will again teach a course similar to the one Bruce Anderson taught before he retired.

With Brian’s retirement on June 30, 2012 we will be interviewing for an extension associate to replace him in the spring. We have set an aggressive goal in raising money on Brain’s behalf to contribute to the leadership fund. The leadership fund will help fund NECC activities going forward supporting the young cooperators’ annual meeting and a cooperative course at the Dyson School.

With that mark your calendars for the annual meeting with CoBank on March 28-29, 2012. We again have a great cast of speakers with Jeff Lakner, farmer director of the S. Dakota Wheat Growers Cooperative, economist Marci Rossell, John Hofmeister, CEO of Citizens for Affordable Energy, and Mark Piper Vice President for Sourcing, Fonterra (USA) Inc. We will be honoring Brian Henehan and Bob Edgerton at the evening banquet. Come prepared to share stories on those two guys that have served us so well for so long. With that I hope and pray that the New Year brings you all good health and prosperity.

Thank you,
Eric

NECC LAUNCHES FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

The Council is launching a fund raising campaign to build the Cornell Cooperative Leadership Fund to support education and research on cooperative enterprise at Cornell in honor of Brian Henehan who will be retiring at the end of June. The resources of the Fund would be used to support:

- Personnel associated with the Cooperative Enterprise program
- Teaching a new undergraduate course on Cooperative Management and Strategy
- Scholarships for students interested in cooperative enterprise
- Programs sponsored by NECC for current and future cooperative leaders

Fund solicitations will be mailed out soon to prospective donors. Please take time to consider a gift that will help build knowledge about the cooperative business model. For more information, contact Eric Zuber, NECC President or Prof. Todd Schmit at Cornell.