

Andrew Van Ord, Secretary
(412) 795-5183
oxhilldevons@gmail.com

AMDCA Newsletter September 2016
Volume 3, Issue 3

American Milking Devon Cattle Association

Established in 1978 to promote the conservation of American Milking Devon cattle as a triple purpose breed by maintaining a breed registry, encouraging knowledgeable and responsible breeding, and educating the public about the historic role of American Milking Devon Cattle, as well as their place in a healthy sustainable agriculture.

Properly cared for Milking Devons will work for you, not you work for them.-- Dianna Kille



THE MICHAUD FAMILY AND THEIR AMD OXEN MAKE HISTORY (Story Inside)
From Left: Dawson, Jeremy, Steers Bo and Luke, Lincoln (red hat), Gabriel (orange hat)
(Picture courtesy of Jeremy & Leslie Michaud)

To stop receiving the newsletter or if you have suggestions, content or announcements to be included, please contact Tom Slater
patriotsretreatfarm@yahoo.com

FEATURE ARTICLE ON DAIRYING WITH GRASS-FED CATTLE: “A BREED LIKE THE DEVON WOULD HAVE A VERY DISTINCT ADVANTAGE”

This Feature Article is a transcript of a presentation made by Brent Beidler at the Annual Meeting of the American Milking Devon Cattle Association held in Tunbridge, Vermont on May 7th, 2016. The subject is grass-fed dairying and will be presented in three parts due to the length of the presentation. Readers are welcome to respond to this article. Responses may be included in the OVER THE BARNYARD FENCE section of the next edition. The AMDCA Newsletter exists to promote the AMD breed, not individual breeders. Submissions for the newsletter need to be directly AMD related. The Editor reserves the right to edit any submissions in accordance with this policy.

Part2: Transitioning from Grain-Fed to Grass-Fed

By 2008 we had completely eliminated grain from the diet. We were down to two pounds which I thought was necessary to get the cows to come into the barn and get into the stalls right. Every cow has a stall in my barn. Then I realized you can eliminate that too by putting a little salt in front of them. In the summer time they would come into their stall that way and that was enough, they did okay, they did fine actually. A couple of things that I am going to just mention have been helpful for us in making the switch to no grain, [the first being] the importance of energy in the diet.

Whether it's grazing or the feed that you put up, it has to be high energy, with protein usually in excess. It's all about energy and one of the ways we've been able to do that on the stored feed side of things is by wrapped round bales that are made with energy in mind. So hay in a day we try to do as much as possible. We mow in the morning and then by late evening I'm baling, it winds up with a little bit of wrapping late at night. Anyway you can do it to get more energy in the feed is helpful. Palatability of the feed just increased more in the list of priorities on our farm because you can get a cow to eat grain any day of the week, but getting them to eat a little more forage has been the key.

The amount of dry matter intake that a cow can eat really depends on her capacity, but also how palatable her feed is, how much they really want to eat it. I always tell people that work for me, if someone has a chance to do a milking for me, did the cows look like beach balls when they left the barn because that means they are fed to capacity and that is kind of the way my cows have to look, whether it's on grass or the stored feed. The other thing that has been really helpful for us and other grass producers that I know is to feed calves on milk a little bit longer than typically is done on dairy farms. I used to feed eight weeks on milk but going out four to five months really builds a calf that is able to function in our grass-fed system much better.

As far as grazing goes, I graze a little bit higher than I used to. I used to think about the grazing height being four to eight inches. That was good, but most of the time I'm grazing just a little bit higher to get a little bit more fiber as part of the grass that the cows are eating, and not having any breaks in the grazing system. Typically during the summer we have a slump period where the cows don't have as much grass, it's hot and they don't want to eat as much. We make sure

we are growing some, I use Japanese millet, but some people use sorghum or sudan grass or anything you can do just so there are no breaks.

Part 2 (Continued): The Grass-fed Dairy Market

I wanted to talk briefly about the grass fed market and what my experience has been. Organic Valley has existed about 3 years now, it started in California. They started a grass milk line as a pilot project to see how the consuming public was going to react to it and it's been overwhelming, overwhelmingly positive. It's considered the fastest growing—they call it a skew-product in the organic market for sure. They have experienced a lot of growth with it. In Vermont there is one truck load that is being processed here. There are 13 producers and it fills up a tractor-trailer that has to run all up and down the state to make the connections. There are more producers that want to be on this than are currently on. There's probably space for another tractor-trailer load, it's connecting the dots.



Demand is there, the new thing is that it's been currently a non-homogenized 100% grass product and that works for some people that are looking for a non-homogenized milk. Other people are looking for ultra-pasteurized where it has a longer shelf-life. It's sometimes problematic if you have a cream on top and the little cap that you're pouring out of, it comes out in clumps. We farmers, we all know about shaking but not everybody does, and so that's why now there is another product that is just coming on line, it's just being produced starting April, that will allow both of those products to be produced. **(Photo at left: Brent Beidler with adoring fans.)**

So in the east it's Vermont and New York that have routes for Organic Valley and there's a whole mess of little smaller manufacturing products that are coming out in the grass-fed. It's a real growth area, and to the point where there needs to almost be some sort of certification for grass-fed that applies to dairy as there has been for beef for a number of years, so we're all talking about the same thing when we say grass-fed, what does that really mean. Organic Valley standards are one thing and then there's Maple Hill that produces yogurt, how does that match up. So that's a conversation that is currently happening and I think that within a year it will be ironed out. It's in the talking through phase. Farmers are saying what's important to them, some groups allow the use of molasses as a supplement, as an energy supplement, other ones are saying no, so it's back and forth. **(To be continued next Issue).**

DEVON HISTORICAL RECORDS AVAILABLE

Several historical documents/herd books are now available as follows:

American Devon Record Vol 10 <https://s3.amazonaws.com/herdbooks/ADR10.pdf>

American Devon Record Vol 9 Bulls <https://s3.amazonaws.com/herdbooks/ADR9/bulls002.pdf>

American Milking Devon Record 1996 <https://s3.amazonaws.com/herdbooks/amdr1996.pdf>

ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

GENERAL REMINDERS

- At the Annual Meeting the membership passed a MOTION that members not in good standing by April 1st of each year will not receive an election ballot
- **New Policies affecting Registration of Cattle: After discussion at the Annual Meeting, the Membership directed the Board of Directors to develop and implement two new policies regarding registration. The first directive was to develop a policy that created an upper age limit for the registration of cattle, and the second directive was to create a sliding fee scale for registration that increased with the age of the animal being registered. These policies were deemed necessary by the Membership, as many problems and issues arise and increase the longer registration of an animal is delayed. The Membership felt that these two policies would encourage more timely registration of animals, contribute to a more accurate Registry, and reduce some of the problems which the Association has no control over that are currently occurring between buyers and sellers. The Membership also directed the Board to provide a grace period before these new policies took effect, so those who currently own unregistered cattle may have ample time to get them registered. Based on the directives of the Membership, the Board adopted the following policies at the June meeting:**
 - **Effective midnight December 31, 2017 no animals exceeding five(5) years of age will be registered by the American Milking Devon Cattle Association.**
 - **Effective midnight December 31, 2017 a new cattle registration fee schedule will be implemented as follows:**
 - **Cattle less than one year old -\$5**
 - **Cattle one year old but less than two years old -\$10**
 - **Cattle two years old but less than three years old-\$25**
 - **Cattle three years old but less than five years old- \$50**
 - **The Registrar is to receive \$25 of the \$50 fee for three years and older registrations due to the volume of work involved**
 - **Cattle five years old or older cannot be registered**
 - **Mistakes in registrations that are corrected by the Registrar will be published in an Appendix of a future edition of The Herd Book.**
- **Membership/Dues Policy Reminder-** Membership is open to any individual or organization interested in furthering the purposes of the Association. An organization shall designate an individual to represent it at business meetings of the Association. There shall be three categories of membership;
 1. Voting Members, consisting of all members owning registered Milking Devon cattle.
 2. Associate Members, who wish to further the purposes of the Association.
 The annual dues for these two categories as established by the Board (currently \$20) shall be due and payable on or before December 31 of each calendar year. Lapsed members shall be reinstated on payment of outstanding and current year dues.
 3. Junior Members, a category open to those under 21 years of age for a single dues payment (currently \$20), can access all membership services at the established fees.

Membership/Dues Policy Reminder (Continued) Only Voting Members are entitled to vote at membership meetings. Except for voting rights, no distinction shall be made between the three membership categories as to the availability or cost of services provided.

- **Buying and Selling Cattle-** Issues continue to arise between buyers and sellers of cattle regarding registration. AMDCA does not have standing to resolve issues between buyers and sellers. As a friendly reminder, it is the seller's responsibility to ensure the cattle being sold are properly registered. Prior to purchasing an animal the buyer should inquire about the registration status of the animal in question and the AMDCA membership status of the seller. If you buy an animal on a 'promise' of future registration you are taking a chance. Sometimes sellers cannot prove lineage in order to get cattle registered. In order to register cattle, sellers also need to be current members of the AMDCA. Buyers should exercise caution in purchasing animals.

DEVONS MAKE THE NEWS...AGAIN!! THE MICHAUD BOYS MAKE HISTORY!!

On Monday, August 8th, about 2,500 people showed up to watch 23 teams of oxen managed by 4-H teamsters relocate an historical 1823 schoolhouse in Brownington, Vt. The project was the brainchild of Peggy Day Gibson, director of the Old Stone House Museum in Brownington. The schoolhouse moved was the Orleans County Grammar School, which Alexander Twilight, the first African-American to graduate from an American college, founded and then taught at. The building, 106-tons, was raised and placed on a hydraulic-powered carriage and was moved about a third of a mile uphill to its original location by teams of oxen organized in two lines. Power lines had to be taken down and reassembled to accommodate the move, which took about two hours. **(Picture**



at Right: Gabriel Michaud with Bo and Luke getting ready for the big day; Picture at left: Dad Jeremy, Bo and Luke, Gabriel and Lincoln)

There was a delay during the move of about an hour when the hydraulic equipment sprung a leak. Among those making history was the Michaud family. Lincoln and Gabriel Michaud, of East Hardwick, VT, own a pair of American Milking Devon steers named Bo and Luke. Bo and Luke were the only pair of Milking Devons to participate in the project. In order to help manage the

influx of oxen, the museum had to develop the infrastructure to support the animals for a few days. They built a 150-foot tie-up rail with partitions for each team, covered with five 40-foot tents. Local farmers donated feed and water tanks.



The ox teams were hooked up for the first time on Sunday as a trial to determine the best order for the teams. On Monday, the day of the move, they were hooked up with “jingle bobs,”—steel triangles custom-made by blacksmiths associated with the museum. The museum originally planned to take down the tie up rail but decided to leave it so they can have more ox-related events in the future. **(Picture at left: Dad Jeremy, Bo and Luke, Lincoln and Gabriel all**

watching and getting ready to make the turn, almost there.)

If you are interested in more information on this historical event and the participation of the Michaud family please check out the following resources, which include links to newspaper articles and videos.

<http://www.vnews.com/Oxen-Re-enact-Move-of-Orleans-County-Grammar-School-3989228>

<http://www.wcax.com/story/32708926/oxen-power-moves-historic-school-house>

<http://m.wptz.com/news/44-oxen-heave-historic-building-back-to-original-location/41108782>

<http://bfpne.ws/2b9CfU7>

(Thank you to Jeremy and Leslie Michaud for the pictures and information for this article.)

Ray's Corner- Handling Cows and Calves

Quotes and advice from Director Ray Clark

The natural instinct of a cow with a newborn calf is to be near and protect the calf. The demeanor of an otherwise friendly cow is likely to change for a period of time immediately after a calf is born. This means your interaction with the cow must adjust to the situation. As a rule it is best to never get between an unsecured cow and her newborn calf. It is also best to not touch the calf unless the mother is tied up or otherwise contained. It only takes an instant for the mother to react and you can easily get hurt. I have used a method to manage cow/calf pairs safely that has served me well for many years and produces friendly, manageable cows. My cows all calve in a tie stanchion. When the calf is born I spray the navel and ensure the calf feeds, getting the essential colostrum. Then I put the calf in a box stall. Once safely in the box stall, I then put the mother in with the calf. After three to four days I take the cow out and tie her in the stanchion. The calf is then retrieved and tied behind the cow so she can see it. I let the calf loose twice a day to feed on the cow. Calves can be easily tattooed and otherwise marked at this time. When the spring grass is ready, about six to eight weeks after the birth, I turn both the cow and calf loose on the pasture.

When it comes time to wean, I bring the mothers in and tie them up first, leaving the calves outside with one cow. The presence of the cow tends to keep the calves quiet. Eventually the tied mothers start calling for their calves. The calves will come into the barn on their own and are put in a box stall to capture them. Once they are all in, ropes are put on the calves and they are again tied behind their mothers to wean. Since they have already been tied as new-borns, they only resist the rope for about five minutes and then settle down. Weaning takes about a week and then things quiet down. To tame the young heifers and get them ready to milk in the future, almost daily, we run our hands along the bottom of the udder, on the back and both sides. We do not squeeze the teats as there is a wax seal there that you can break and that could allow infection in. This familiarity with the human touch will make the first milking easier—generally. It is my experience that while most cows just kick, Devons have the ability to accurately target their kicks. You might think you are out of range, but they might still get you.

Young bulls can be tamed by putting them with their father or a dominate cow at about one year old. They will quiet the young bull down and usually they'll become settled for life. Occasional scratches under the bulls chin and on the tail head on either side of the tail are usually appreciated by the bull. Don't scratch the bull on the head or between the eyes as that triggers their charge reflex. Cows appreciate the tail head scratch as well, and if done on a regular basis can reduce kicking, as the cow will be expecting a friendly scratch when you come near. The most important thing I can leave you with is to never get between an unsecured cow and her calf.

NEED BROCHURES??

The Association has recently had a new batch of American Milking Devon Cattle brochures produced and is offering them free of charge to AMDCA members. If you would like some, please contact Association Secretary Andrew Van Ord. His contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.

EVENTS YOU JUST SHOULDN'T MISS...

Livestock Conservancy National Conference- The AMDCA is planning a regional meeting **Saturday November 5th** from 12:30-2:00 P.M. in association with the Livestock Conservancy's National Conference which is being held at Hampshire College, Amherst, MA, **November 3-5, 2016**. President of AMDCA, John L. Hall III, is planning for that meeting and is seeking members who might be interested in making a short presentation at the meeting regarding some aspect of working with American Milking Devons, i.e., grass-fed-dairy, grass-fed beef, draft, cow/calf operation, cheese-making, marketing Devon products, etc. If you are interested in assisting with this please contact President Hall as soon as possible. Contact information is on the last page of the newsletter.

OVER THE BARNYARD FENCE – No responses this quarter

This section is for reader opinions and experiences with FEATURE ARTICLE topics from prior editions. The Association does not endorse or recommend policies and practices expressed in this newsletter. It is left to the reader to decide for themselves the policies and practices they wish to employ. However, we sincerely thank the author(s) of this section for their willingness to take the time to express their opinions and share their experiences. You can submit your articles to the Editor through e-mail at patriotsretreatfarm@yahoo.com . If you don't have e-mail, send a hard copy to Thomas H. Slater, 303 Cripplebush Rd., Central Bridge, NY 12035.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES FOR DECEMBER NEWSLETTER IS DECEMBER 15, 2016.

AMDCA Officers

Director/President/Treasurer

John L. Hall III
610 East Pond Meadow Road
Westbrook, CT 06498
(860) 399-4611 (home)
(860) 391-4044 (cell)
johnandbonniehall610@comcast.net

Director/Vice-President

Jeremy Michaud
70 Michaud Farm Road
East Hardwick, VT 05836
(802) 472-6261
ljp6@cornell.edu

Director/Secretary/Communications Committee

Andrew Van Ord
727 Townline Rd
Russell, PA 16345
(412) 795-5183
oxhilldevons@gmail.com

Director/Genetics Committee/Clerk

Ray Clark
1429 Red Village Rd
Lyndonville, VT 05851
(802) 626-8306

Director/Newsletter Editor

Thomas H. Slater
303 Cripplebush Rd.
Central Bridge, NY 12035
(518) 868-9328
patriotsretreatfarm@yahoo.com

Directors

Bruce Farr
51 Catamount Rd
Northwood, NH 03261
(603) 942-8128
farrviewsouthfarm@yahoo.com

Dexter E Randall
813 Kittridge Rd
Newport Center, VT 05857
(802) 334-5966
(802) 744-2417

Registrar

Bonnie Hall
610 East Pond Meadow Road
Westbrook, CT 06498
(860) 399-4611
johnandbonniehall610@comcast.net

Association Contact: Please direct questions to Ray Clark at (802) 626-8306
Website: <http://www.milkingdevons.org>

AMDCA Volunteers

Webmaster

Lawrence Gilley
PO Box 277
Deansboro, NY 13328
(315) 821-6628 lgilley@tds.net

This newsletter is provided to AMDCA members in the United States and Canada for information and educational purposes. The views, opinions and recommendations expressed herein are those of individual contributors and are not endorsed by, or represent the policy of AMDCA or its Directors, Officers and volunteer staff. Members must use their own judgment in deciding whether farming management practices described herein are safe and appropriate for their particular circumstances.

FEEDBACK- Your comments, ideas and "constructive" criticism are always welcome. I would like to know what topics interest you that could become feature articles. The best way to reach me is through e-mail patriotsretreatfarm@yahoo.com . If you don't have e-mail call me at (518) 868-9328 or mail me at Thomas H. Slater, 303 Cripplebush Rd., Central Bridge, NY 12035. Thank you in advance for your assistance with this newsletter.