



Hundreds of farmers, agribusiness representatives and educators attend the annual winter meetings of New York Certified Organic. The 2019 meeting dates are January 8, February 12, and March 12. Photo: NYCO

**Press Release: December 3, 2018**

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**New York Certified Organic Sets 2019 Winter Program Dates: January 8, February 12, March 12**

Geneva, N.Y. New York Certified Organic (NYCO) begins its 26<sup>th</sup> year as an organic field crop and dairy discussion grouping 2019. The meetings bring together grain and dairy farmers to hear guest speakers on topics of organic crops and dairy production. The 2019 dates are January 8, February 12 and March 12. Each program begins at 10 AM in Jordan Hall, 630 West North Street at the Cornell AgriTech (formerly Ag Experiment Station), Geneva, NY.

There is no cost or need to register to attend the NYCO meetings; participants are asked to bring a dish to pass at the potluck lunch. Round table discussions after lunch provide the opportunity to ask questions and hear from the combined experience of the group. These sessions help advance organic production in New York and have been helpful to new and transitioning farmers as well as long-time organic producers.

The January 8, 2019, NYCO meeting will feature a presentation by Tomasz B. Falkowski, Ph.D of the Cornell University Horticulture Department. He and his colleagues have developed a project, modeled after the Practical Farmers of Iowa, that would empower farmers to do farm research on their farms. NYCO farmers will be able

to make contact with the project personnel to assess research projects they would like to do on their farms.

The January 8 meeting will also include a discussion of bedded pack barns which have been of interest to smaller dairies and beef operations as a way to provide their animals with the highest comfort and produce carbon-rich manure matter that provides nutrients for a healthier soil. Farmers Mike and Karen Hooper of Memphis, N.Y., and Ben and Kate Whittemore of Candor, N.Y., will share their experience with these barns. The Hooper's composting bedded pack barn has two Lely robots to milk their 110 cows. The Whittemore's built their composting bedded pack in 2010 for 85 cows. As they expanded in cow numbers they found it beneficial to remove the bedded pack and install free stalls. Cornell Small Dairy Specialist Fay Benson will review bedded pack design concerns and resources he has collected over the years.

Producers, educators and agribusiness representatives are encouraged to mark calendars for the January 8, February 12, and March 12, 2019 NYCO meetings. For more information, contact Fay Benson, 607-391-2699, [afb3@cornell.edu](mailto:afb3@cornell.edu). Benson is an educator with the Cornell University South Central NY Regional Team, project manager for the NY Organic Dairy Program, and coordinator of the NY Soil Health Trailer.

Information on past NYCO meetings is online at <http://blogs.cornell.edu/organicdairyinitiative/>.