



2015 Conservation Webinars

Date	2015 Conservation Webinars Topics
August 4	Opportunities for Conservation in Organic Livestock Systems
August 27	Environmental Benefits of Organic Agriculture: Soil
Sept 23	Environmental Benefits of Organic Agriculture: Water Quality

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Opportunities for Conservation in Organic Livestock Systems

Steve Normanton, Organic Livestock
Producer, New Hampshire

Chad Cochran, District Conservationist,
New Hampshire NRCS

Introductions

Steve Normanton

*Certified Organic Livestock
Producer*

Steve Normanton Grass-fed
Beef

Litchfield, NH

Chad Cochran

District Conservationist

USDA-NRCS

Hillsborough & Merrimack
Counties, NH



Conservation Plan Map

Date: 4/17/2015

Customer(s): NORMANTON FARMS LLC
 District: HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
 Approximate Acres: 66.3
 Legal Description: All boundaries are approximate. FSA Farm 44, Tract 1536

Field Office: HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY SERVICE CENTER
 Agency: NRCS
 Assisted By: CHAD S. COCHRANE
 State and County: NH, HILLSBOROUGH



Legend

Practice name

- Pumping Plant
- Structure for Water Control
- Hydrant
- Hydrant/Drain
- Irrigation Pipeline, 3" Dia. Mainline
- Irrigation Pipeline, 4" Dia. Mainline
- Irrigation Pipeline, Surface Line
- Cover Crop - 2016-2018
- Forage and Biomass Planting
- Irrigation System, Microirrigation
- Irrigation Water Management
- Seasonal High Tunnel
- Consplan_AllTracts

Roads & Highways

- Major Hwy
- State Hwy
- City Hwy
- Town Road
- Discontinued (VI)
- Federal Road
- Private Drive
- Streams & Rivers
- Water Bodies

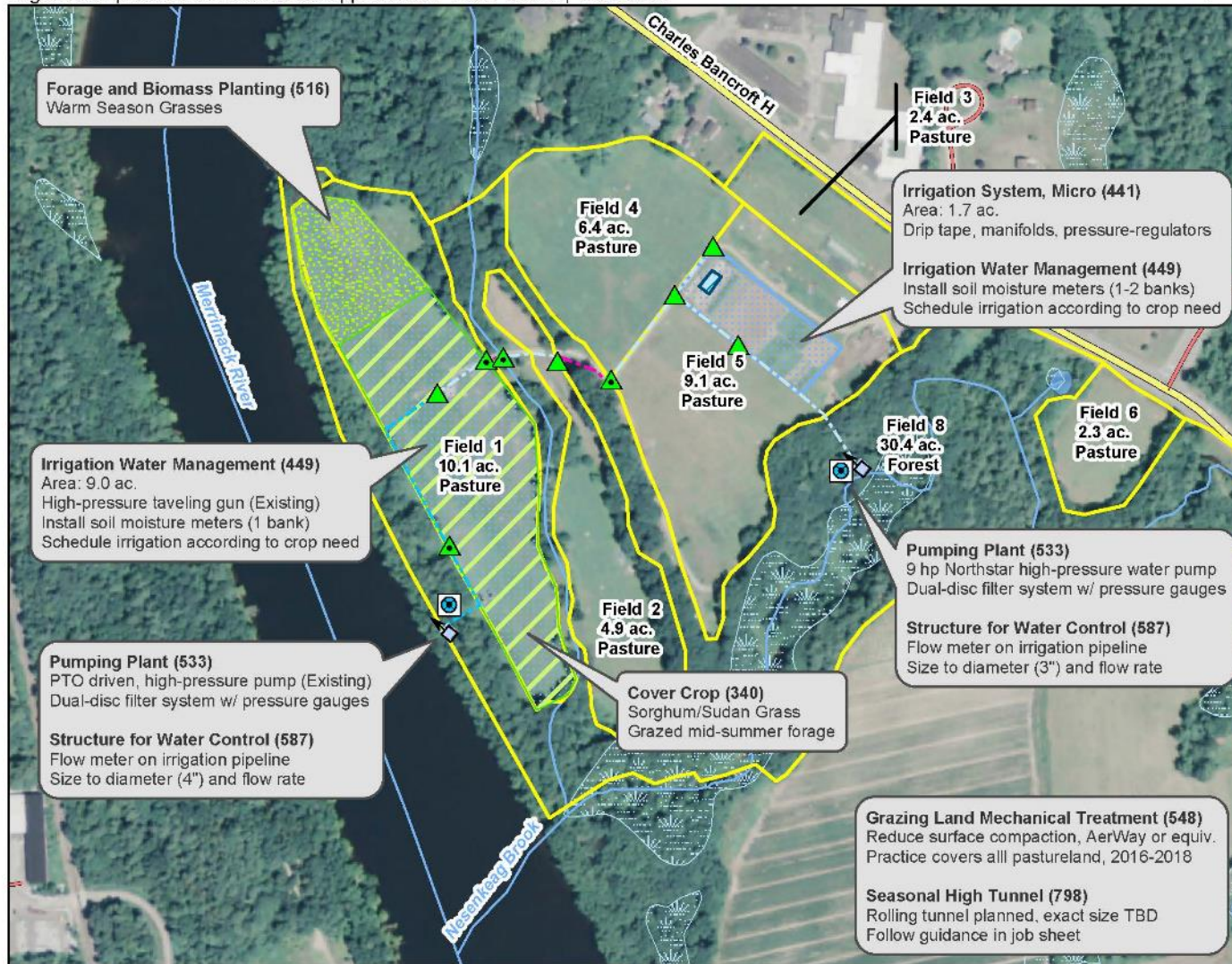


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Agenda

- Goals
- Demystifying the Organic Livestock Farmer
- Focused Planning
- Farm Bill Program Assistance
- Questions



Goals

Be more...

- Comfortable
- Confident
- Credible

Avoid...

- Value judgements
- Debate
- Assumptions



The Organic Livestock Producer

Who are they?

Typical farmers

Why do they farm organically?

Ask them

What do I have to fear?

Nothing!



(Photo: Mark Marturello/Register illustration)

The Organic Livestock Producer

- Great variation among organic producers
- Face many of the same local constraints as other producers
 - Time
 - Labor
 - Capital
 - Knowledge
 - Markets (?)
 - Seed and feed sources (?)



(Photo: Mark Marturello/Register illustration)

Follow the Rules

Organic farms and processors:

- Preserve natural resources and biodiversity
- Support animal health and welfare
- Provide access to the outdoors so that animals can exercise their natural behaviors
- Only use approved materials
- Do not use genetically modified ingredients
- Receive annual onsite inspections
- Separate organic food from non-organic food



Follow the Rules

What should you know?

- Become familiar with the basic organic rules
 - It *can* get complicated
 - Compliance is not your job
- Avoid giving guidance about the rules; defer to the certification agency
- Don't plan a conflict with their organic system



Follow the Rules

Resources

- USDA – Organic Web Pages
<http://usda.gov/organic>
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/organic>
- The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service - ATTRA
<https://attra.ncat.org/organic.html>
- State Department of Ag.
- Cooperative Extension Service
- The Farmer



Planning for Organic Livestock

General Principals

- Provide new tools in the organic producer's toolbox
- Adjust "typical" planning scenarios
- Accept change
- Have fun!



The Rules, Again

Organic farms and processors:

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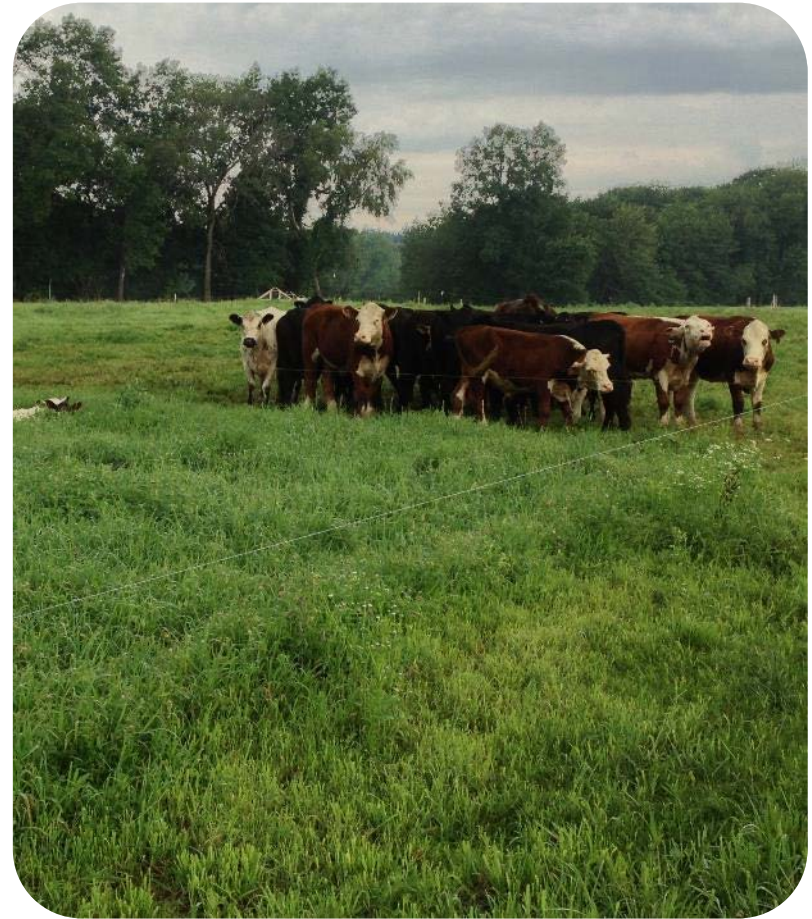
Consequence:

Grazing is a key component of most organic livestock operations

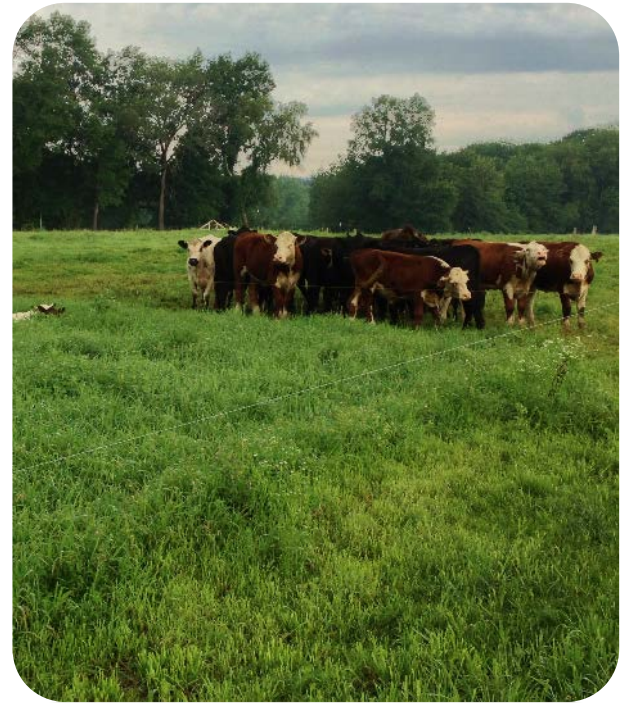
Organic Livestock Grazing

Rotational grazing is a natural fit

- Reduces or eliminates costly grain
- Highly efficient use of energy and nutrients
- Builds healthy soils and protects water quality
- Promotes natural animal behavior



Organic Livestock Grazing



Multi-species Grazing

Silvopasture



Tools of the Trade

Fence

Water

Forages



Fence

- Perimeter
 - Keep animals on the property
 - Permanent
- Interior
 - Isolate animals to paddocks
 - Temporary



Fence

****No Pressure Treated Posts****



Black Locust

Exclusionary Fence



Restrict animal access to sensitive areas: ponds, brooks, wetlands, well heads, etc.

Water

Animals isolated in paddocks or excluded from surface water require an alternate water source

Water systems can be simple or complex



Water Well (642)/ Spring Development (574)

Livestock Pipeline (516)

Watering Facility (614)



Water



Portable vs. Permanent

Forages

Grazing animals require high-quality, locally adapted forages

Grazed forages provide the majority of DM intake



No-till Interseeding



Reduces inputs, energy efficient, utilizes existing forages, builds soil quality, eliminates erosion concerns

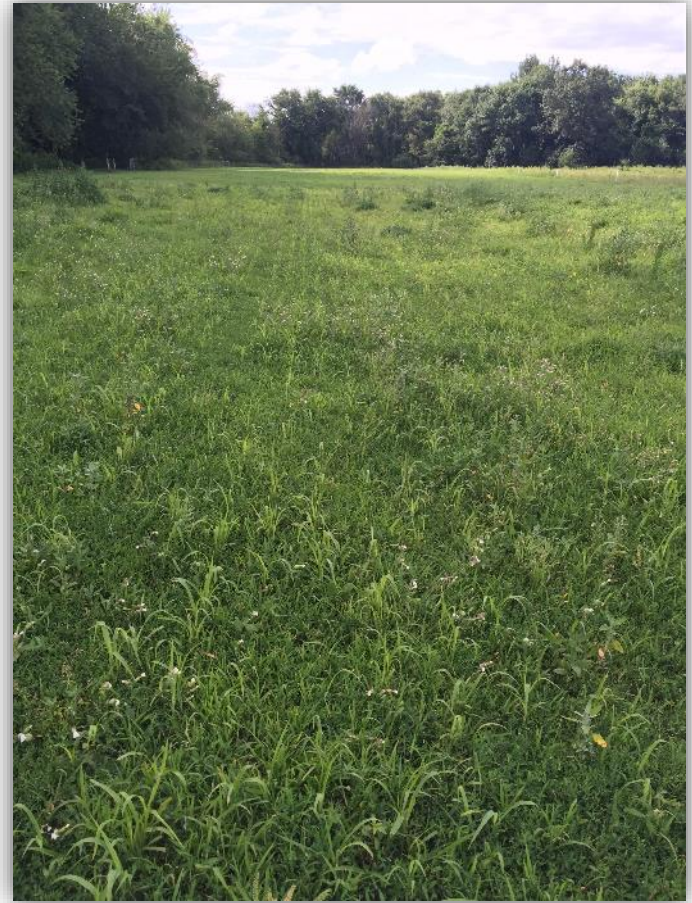
Warm Season Grasses

- Supplements cool season grasses during “summer slump”
- Adapted to hot, dry, nutrient poor conditions; C4 carbon fixation
- Slow to establish and yield results



Sorghum-Sudan Grass Cover Crop

- Interseed into cool season grass pasture
- Adapted to hot, dry, ~~nutrient poor~~ conditions; C4 carbon fixation
- Establishes quickly
- Produces high biomass
- Helps alleviate compaction



Manure Management



Heavy-Use Area (561)
Waste Storage Facility (313)

Composting Bedded Pack Barn



Conclusions

Be more...

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- Confident
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Avoid...

- Value judgements
- Debate
- Assumptions



Questions?

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Steve Normanton Grass-fed
Beef

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