

Reedy Fork Organic Dairy
Visit Report – May 4, 2010

History – The 600 acre dairy has been certified organic for 3 years but has been a non-organic dairy for much longer. Currently, 100 cows are milking with an average of 80 calves/year. Heifer and steers are both being raised with the goal of selling organic hamburger meat locally. The cull rate is 18-20% there are not any vaccinations currently. Parasite control includes an essential oil product, tincture of garlic, iodine (skin lesions), and diatomaceous earth in the mineral mix. The veterinary costs have decreased since switching to organic and veterinary services are only used for palpation of pregnancy. In general, the dairy owner feels the environmental differences have increased the overall health of the herd.

Animal Flow – Calving typically occurs in the pastures although there is a maternity ward if needed. The calves are weaned at 2 days and are put in individual hutches. The calves stay in the hutches for 6-8 weeks. At that point, the calves are put on pasture in “netted” areas that are moved twice a week. They are also group fed milk until 90 days of age. The heifers are moved at 8 months of age moved onto non-rotational pasture and onto another at 14 months. At about 18 months the heifers are moved to the breeding pasture with 2 bulls for breeding. The milking cows are kept in a rotational milking pasture.

Samples and Results – Fecal samples were collected and prepared using double centrifugation. (epg=eggs per gram feces; TNTC=too numerous to count)

- Calves in Hutches
 - o Calves 243, 420, 244, 418, and 421 - Negative for parasites
 - o Calf 419 – Coccidia 26 epg
 - o Barn calf 218 – Strongyle-type eggs 3.3 epg
- Calves on Rotation Pasture – 5 months
 - o Calf 396 – Strongyle-type – 91.3 epg; Nematodirus - 1.3 epg; Coccidia – TNTC
 - o Calf 400 – Strongyle-type – 5 epg
 - o Unknown - Strongyle-type - .3 epg
- Calves on Rotation Pasture – 4 months
 - o Calf 408 – Strongyle-type – 1 epg; Nematodirus – 1.3 epg; Coccidia – TNTC
 - o Calf 227 – Stronglye-type – 30 epg
 - o Unknown – Nematodirus - .66 epg; Coccidia - TNTC
 - o Unknown – Strongyle-type – 16 epg; Nematodirus – 1.3 epg; Coccidia – TNTC
- Calves on Non-rotation Pasture – 12 months
 - o Unknown – Strongyle-type – 33 epg
 - o Unknown – Strongyle-type - .33 epg
 - o Unknown – Strongyle-type – 24 epg
- Calves on Non-rotation Pasture – 18 months
 - o Unknown – Strongyle-type – 2.3 epg; Coccidia – TNTC
 - o Unknown – Strongyle-type – 1 epg; Coccidia 4.6 epg

- Unknown – Strongyle-type – 1.3 epg
- Unknown – Strongyle-type .3 epg
- Breeding Pasture
 - Unknown – Strongyle-type - .6 epg
 - Unknown – Strongyle-type – 17 epg
 - Unknown – Strongyle-type – 1.6 epg
 - Unknown – Strongyle-type – 1 epg; Coccidia – 2 epg
 - Unknown – Strongyle-type - .6 epg
 - Unknown – Strongyle-type – 2 epg
 - Unknown – Strongyle-type – 2.3 epg
 - Unknown – Strongyle-type – 2 epg
- Milking Pasture
 - Unknown – Strongyle-type - .33 epg
 - Unknown – Strongyle-type – 1.33 epg
 - Unknown – Negative
- Lactating cows barn
 - Cow 101 and 2 unknowns – Negative
 - Unknown – Strongyle-type - .33 epg

Parasite Summary – The strongyle-type eggs are most likely *Ostertagia* or *Cooperia*. The genus of coccidia is likely *Eimeria*. We also found *Nematodirus*.

- *Ostertagia* – *Ostertagia ostertagi* also Brown Stomach Worm
 - Larvae are ingested from pasture and mature in the abomasums.
 - Clinical signs – not eating, diarrhea, weight loss, poor growth
 - Common 4-8 weeks after being put on pasture
- *Cooperia* – *Cooperia punctata*
 - Found in small intestine
 - Clinical signs – not eating, diarrhea.
 - Usually not the only source of disease
- Coccidia – *Eimeria bovis*
 - Eggs are ingested from pasture
 - Once the organism passes through the system it is gone unless there is re-ingestion
 - Clinical signs – diarrhea, fever, straining to defecate
 - Most at risk animals are young, crowded and stressed animals particularly in the spring and fall.
- *Nematodirus*
 - Doesn't usually cause disease in cattle.

Recommendations – The limit for concern of strongyle-type eggs is 200 epg, which is much higher than we are seeing in this farm. Since calves are not showing any clinical signs, the recommendation is to keep management as is. No drastic changes are needed. Watch the calves coming off of the rotational

pasture for clinical signs such as dehydration and depression as this may indicate parasitic diseases. We recommend reassessment of parasite ova in animal feces in the fall after grazing season.