

# Grass-Fed Dairy Workshop

## Healthy Soil, Pasture & Forage

**Date:** April 3, 2024      **Time:** 10:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

**Location:** South Minden Fire Hall, 1029 Hwy 163, Fort Plain, NY 13339

Join Dr. Heather Darby and Sara Ziegler from the University of Vermont Extension and Sarah Flack from Sarah Flack Consulting for a day long workshop focused on how soil health, soil fertility, and grazing management impact forage productivity and quality and your farm's viability. Joshua Green from Trees for Graziers will be available to provide information and resources on successfully establishing trees in and around pastures.

### Agenda

- 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.** Soil Health with Heather Darby
- 11:30 - 12:00 p.m.** Whole Farm Nutrient Flow with Sara Ziegler
- 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.** Lunch (provided)
- 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.** Advanced Grazing Practices with Sarah Flack
- 2:00 - 2:30 p.m.** Managing Forages for Quality & Productivity with Heather & Sara
- 2:30 - 3:00 p.m.** Questions and Discussion of Grass-fed Dairy Research

A more detailed description of each of these sessions are provided on page 2.

Interested in attending? This event is free of cost, but **REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.**

*Please register by March 29, 2024 so we can provide adequate accommodations.*

To **register by phone**, please contact **Susan Brouillette at (802) 656-7611.**

To **register by mail**, please return the bottom portion of this flyer to the Northwest Crops and Soils Program at the address listed in the yellow box below.

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**First Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Last Name:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Address Line 1:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Address Line 2:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip Code:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Circle One:** Work Home Cell

*To request a disability related accommodation to participate in this program, please contact Susan Brouillette at (802) 656-7611 by March 13, 2024 so we may assist you.*



100% GRASSFED  
MAPLE HILL  
= organic =



**Northwest Crops and Soils Program** | 278 South Main Street, Suite 2 | St. Albans, VT 05478

802-524-6501 or 1-800-639-2130 (toll-free in Vt.) | [cropsoil@uvm.edu](mailto:cropsoil@uvm.edu)

[uvm.edu/extension/nwcrops](http://uvm.edu/extension/nwcrops)



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COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES

# Grass-Fed Dairy Workshop

## *Healthy Soil, Pasture & Forage*

### **10:30—11:30 a.m. Soil Health with Dr. Heather Darby**

Lab testing of soils can provide useful information on nutrients, organic matter and pH, but other ways of assessing soil health are equally important. Heather will talk about the wide range of assessments we can use to understand if our soils are healthy and practical ways to make improvements. This session will also include information on recent research on dung beetles and predatory beetles on NY dairy farms and how these insects can benefit the health of both the cows and the soils. Dr. Darby is an Agronomy Specialist with the University of Vermont Extension

### **11:30—12:00 p.m. Whole Farm Nutrient Flow with Sara Ziegler**

Maintaining soil fertility can be a significant challenge on organic dairy farms. How many nutrients come onto a farm through purchased feed, bedding, and fertilizer? How does this balance with the nutrients leaving the farm in milk, cull cows, and crop sales? Understanding the flow and balance of nutrients, especially as a farm stops purchasing grain, is important in supporting long term productivity and viability. Sara will discuss ongoing research in this area on grass-fed and grain feeding organic dairy farms. Sara is an Agronomy Research Specialist with the University of Vermont Extension.

### **12:00—1:00 p.m. Lunch** and time to meet with Joshua Green, Trees for Graziers

### **1:00—2:00 p.m. Advanced Grazing Practices with Sarah Flack**

Sarah Flack will lead an advanced grazing discussion: Beyond basics, how to use all the tools in the "Graziers Toolbox" to improve pastures and avoid pasture pitfalls. Topics will include stocking rates, stocking densities, trampling, post grazing residuals, variable pre-grazing heights, and when to add seed and fertility. Each of these tools can be used to change plant species diversity and plant density, and enhance forage productivity and quality as well as livestock performance. Sarah Flack is an independent grazing consultant.

### **2:00—2:30 p.m. Managing Forages For Quality & Productivity with Heather and Sara**

This session will share insights from recent forage research on how forage species and variety selection, plant diversity, and mower cutting height impact stand persistence, yield and quality.

### **2:30-3:00 p.m. Questions and Discussion of Grass-fed Dairy Research**

Our team has been conducting research on grass-fed dairy systems in NY and VT since 2016 and will continue to do so over the next few years. Our upcoming projects will include the fatty acid composition and sensory quality of grass-fed milk, cost of production, soil fertility and nutrient balances, molasses feeding in combination with different levels of forage quality, calf rumen development and success under different milk feeding regimes, and more. We'll share more about these projects and provide time for questions and discussion to help us meet your needs. Bring your questions!