

Northeast SARE Farmer/Grower Grant Report
Kelmscott Farm
Alternative Feed Source Guide FNE02-403

I. Goals

Our project had two main goals:

- A. To identify sources of alternative feed stuffs throughout Maine and to identify a selected sample of resources in New England listing their location and availability.
- B. To create an alternative feed guide to educate farmers on how to implement these feed sources into their specific feeding programs.

II. Background Information on Kelmscott Farm

Kelmscott Farm is a non-profit 501(c) (3) working farm dedicated to conserving rare and endangered farm livestock, to creating public awareness about the importance of agricultural biodiversity, and to providing educational programs to the broadest possible audience. The Farm leases 146 acres and operates with a staff of seven. We are open to the public and provide a wide range of programs. Kelmscott Farm is dedicated to demonstrating the economic sustainability of rare breeds through niche marketing and value-added products. We have developed a direct marketing program called the Kelmscott Gourmet for our lamb, pork, and turkey products. Kelmscott began operation in 1994 and currently has approximately 250 animals. Our public outreach program, with 10,000 visitors per year, public workshops, etc. creates opportunities for public dissemination of projects and research.

III. Cooperators

This project would not have been possible without significant cooperation with others. Listed below are key collaborators:

Dave Marcinkowski, University of Maine at Orono
Ken Andries, University of Maine at Orono
Thomas Settlemyre, Bowdoin College
Dee Potter, USDA Beef Extension, Aroostook County
Jason Harris, Blue Seal Feeds, Inc.
Rick Kersbergen, Waldo County Cooperative Extension
Richard Brzoowski, Portland, Maine

IV. Project Activities

The following activities were implemented in order to complete the Alternative Feed Source Guide:

- Researched and identified what was currently available for alternative feed stuffs in Maine. This involved developing and implementing a questionnaire; conducting telephone interviews; obtaining feed information concerning supplier, location, type, quality, availability, delivery, etc.
- Obtained samples of feeds and evaluated their nutritional quality.
- Consulted with nutrition experts and advisors as to the functionality of the various feed stuffs.
- Designated feed stuffs in categories based on nutritional value.
- Listed feed sources based on their appropriateness per specie.
- Developed workshop presentation for fall 2002 NEHBC conference and in-house workshops at Kelmscott.
- Printed feed guide in May 2003.

V. Results and Accomplishments

Through this grant, we took a look at what alternative feeds are, some of their positive and negative attributes, how to determine nutritional needs, how feed stuffs are broken down, and how to balance alternative feeds with existing livestock feed rations. We discovered that there is not an abundance of alternative feed resources in New England. However, we believe with proper research and implementation, alternative feeds can be effectively used to enhance existing rations as protein or energy supplements and, thus, help bring down feed costs. The major accomplishment of this grant was the completion of an alternative feed guide to be used, primarily, by small farmers. We wanted to produce a simple, easy to follow guide that could help farmers to balance their livestock feed rations. Rather than prescribe specific types of alternative feeds, our goal was to encourage farmers to consider the potential value and benefits of using alternative feeds and to learn how to calculate livestock feed rations using the Pearson Square. Please see the attached Alternative Feed Guide for specifics.

VI. Site Conditions affecting results

As this was primarily a research project, there were no site conditions that affected our results. With a change in staff, however, the project took us a bit longer than we had originally planned.

VII. Economic Findings

The use of alternative feeds can help farmers to significantly reduce the costs associated with raising livestock. Availability of alternative feed stuffs, will vary, however, from location to location. It is significant to note that when considering an alternative feed, it is important to carefully balance your livestock feed rations (see pp 9 to 12 of our Alternative Feed Guide for details).

VIII. New Ideas

Perhaps, rather than generating new ideas, this project confirmed our belief that using alternative feeds can be a viable method to help farmers reduce their feed costs. The use of alternative feeds, however, may not be applicable to every production situation. We are not suggesting that every producer drastically change his or her feeding program. We are simply encouraging farmers to examine the viability of alternative feeds for their situation.

IX. Future plans to use the practice we investigated

As mentioned above, we found that the use of alternative feed stuffs can be an effective way to help farmers reduce their feed costs. We plan to continue our search for alternative feeds especially options that are locally viable. We would encourage other farms to do the same!

X. Outreach

Our current and future outreach activities include:

- Sharing results at the Common Ground Fair in Unity, Maine and the New England Heritage Breed Conservancy Livestock Exhibition;
- Sharing guides and information with the New England Livestock Alliance (NELA) and with the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC);
- Sharing information regarding our findings on our web site;
- Disseminating the guide at various in-house and external workshops and producer meetings.

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