



Draft Animal-Power Network

CONNECTING ANIMAL-POWERED FARMS, FORESTS, PEOPLE, AND IDEAS

COMPARING CULTIVATOR SYSTEMS: A WORKSHOP AT DAPFD 2013

By Stephen Leslie

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Without a doubt weeds are foremost among the challenges facing the sustainable market grower. The timely removal of weeds so that cash crops can prosper represents one of the single biggest labor expenses in the organic market garden. There are a number of strategies the farmer who chooses not to use herbicides can employ, such as the extensive use



of cover crops to suppress weed germination and stale bedding of open soil with a shallow tillage implement prior to planting to eliminate weed blooms, but ultimately most growers resort to some type of mechanical cultivation system to remove weeds from the row paths once the cash crop has been established. Since the 1970's most organic growers have used the light cultivating tractors that were manufactured in the mid-Twentieth century. Increasingly, many growers are also turning to plastic mulch/drip irrigation systems to suppress weeds, warm the soil, and retain moisture. However, for the ecologically-minded grower neither of these options may prove to be the most appealing solution to the problem of weed pressure.

Increasingly, many growers in the Northeast are turning to animal traction in their market gardens and considering both the new and old systems of cultivation that have been developed specifically for the use of horse farmers. The choice of horses over other forms of traction eliminates

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DOC HAMMILL WORKSHOP REVIEW

By Rebekah Perry

About 25 people converged on the Perry Farm the week after the Draft Animal-Power Field Days to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty perfecting (or at least deepening) their driving & horse handling skills. There were the students, who were there to learn but there were also auditors who watched and asked questions, soaking up all they could. The instructors were wearing two hats at once as they were coaching and taking in information that other instructors were teaching in order to expand their own "toolbag" of teaching exercises and ideas.

The instructors at the workshop included Jay Bailey, Neal Perry and myself, in addition to Doc and Cathy. We took turns teaching different skills, giving participants a variety of teaching styles. Jay and I saw the relevance of the bit board in action, Doc and Cathy commented on wanting to use bailing twine in pre-driving exercises. Neal shared powerful insights into horse behavior in the round-pen. It was an intense 4 days of learning for everyone who participated, teachers and students alike. Thanks to everyone, teachers and students who made the workshop a tremendous learning opportunity for all involved.

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WHOA

from DAPNet President, Donn Hewes

What an amazing time to become DAPNet's next President. Thanks to the incredible efforts of so many volunteers, board members, our administrator, and all of you in this draft animal-powered community. We accomplished so much this year. The Field Days was a huge success! We also helped folks learn about logging, plowing, and farming at other fun events we hosted or sponsored this year. We relaunched our website with the home page, forum and field days all "under one roof" (that is web speak for one web address)!

Speaking of the web, we are still busy coming up with ideas to attract users, links, and advertisers. Our forum, (go to draftanimalpower.com, and click on "Forum") is a great place to meet teamsters, ask questions and connect with our wide flung compatriots. It is fun, easy and friendly. We are planning to spread the word of our new "Member Profiles" and "Topic of the Month" using twitter and face book so if that is where you are hanging out, watch for updates there.

DAPNet has big plans: We hope to attend some regional trade shows and conferences to let folks know what we are up to. We would also like to help promote the events of other local Draft organizations. We are starting to plan a fun Annual Gathering for fall 2014, and we are already actively seeking sites for the 2015 DAP Field Days.

So Join up (or renew) and tell a friend about us! While we can always use the financial support, it is even more important that you let us know that you support our efforts. Also we need your input. Tell us what you would like to see at the 2014 Gathering or the 2015 Field Days, or come to the forum and ask a question. Anyone that knows me will tell you that I am all ears!

"Mulemandonn"
Donn Hewes
DAPNet President

2013 DRAFT ANIMAL-POWER FIELD DAYS IN REVIEW:

Looking back at 2013 the Draft Animal-Power Field Days they were without a doubt a highlight of the year. The event could never have been what it was without the countless hours contributed by a group of dedicated folks. The committee and board did so much to support the event by taking care of details, thinking through the big picture, procuring sponsors, equipment & presenters, stepping up to fill volunteer roles and so much more.



Photo by Jean Cross



Photo by Jean Cross

The presenters and teamsters offered outstanding material on a huge variety of subjects and without them we simply wouldn't have an event. If you have never loaded up your animals to take them to an event, know that it takes weeks of planning and preparation: Making sure all the harness & equipment is clean and in good repair, hasn't been lent to the neighbor or left under a tree in the back field is the first step. Then there is making arrangements for chores for the animals left at home, packing hay, water buckets, shovels and pitch forks. Can you fit it all in? Is the vehicle ready to go? What else will be needed for your demo? Do you have enough extra doohickeys in case something breaks or you discover that you forgot something? The list goes on and that isn't even counting the financial aspect of traveling. If you brought animals to the DAPField Days or if

you attended as a presenter, know that we are deeply grateful for your generosity as well as your knowledge and experience. Thank you.

The weather for the DAPField Days was perfect: sunny and warm but not too hot during the day, cool in the evening without being frigid. People came from all over – Georgia to Ontario, Michigan to Maine and everywhere in between. The Annual Meeting for the American Suffolk Horse Association was held in conjunction with the DAPField Days, bringing folks from Texas to take in the event and enjoy the array of Suffolks who were in attendance. There was a forestry session in the woods, mowing demonstrations in the next-door hayfield and cultivating workshops in the outdoor arena. Doc Hammill and Neal Perry tag-teamed in the pulling arena offering a full weekend of natural horsemanship demonstrations and the VanOrd's brought a bunch of oxen equipment and worked with Anna Peck and Tom Jenkins to offer a huge variety of ox sessions.

As for feedback from those who attended, the top complaint was, "there are too many choices – I can't decide!" We'll take complaints like that any time.



Photo by Jean Cross

Personally, the DAPField Days were deeply rewarding. Seeing it all come together as campers pulled in and set up tents, animals arrived and cars started streaming through the gates... crowds gathered around demonstrators here, there and more over there... what a weekend!

It was a wonderful experience and I look forward to joining Carl Russell and David Fisher in the capacity of "Past Field-Days Organizers" at the 2015 event.

Here's looking forward,
--Rebekah

Cultivating Systems, from page 1

or mitigates issues of compaction and pollution and offers opportunities to develop more of a closed-loop cycling of nutrients within the farm as a whole.

At the Draft Animal-Powered Field Days held this past September in Barton, Vermont I joined with Jelmer Albada of Roxbury Farm in Kinderhook, NY to present a workshop in which we demonstrated several options for developing a cultivation system for the horse-powered market garden. We had on hand: a vintage McCormick-Deering riding cultivator, a vintage International Harvester walk-behind cultivator, two post-World War II era tool carriers from Europe, and two newly manufactured multi-tool carriers from this country. Our purpose in demonstrating these tools at the field days was not to compare them one to another on a merit basis, but rather to give attendees the opportunity to see them all in action and to ask questions so they could begin to discern which system might make the most sense in the particular circumstances of their own farms.

Ken and Martha Laing from Orchard Hill Farm in St. Thomas, Ontario were also present for the workshop and brought with them a pair of rolling shield cultivators made by I&J Mfg. of Gap, PA. They use rolling shields on their McCormick-Deering riding cultivator and find them far superior to the original stationary shields made by the manufacturer. The rolling shields are placed just forward and inside of the innermost cultivating shovels, where they prevent dirt from being thrown onto tiny seedlings, allowing for very early cultivation. Ken pointed out that brackets to attach the shields to the gangs will need to be fabricated as these shields are designed for the new I&J riding cultivators. We also demonstrated the riding cultivator with a farm-manufactured middle shank for marking out rows and creating a planting furrow. This is an innovation first seen on the farm of Anne and Eric Nordell of Trout Run, PA., and is a model that has subsequently been adopted by several market gardeners in the Northeast.

With the help of Rachel, a Suffolk Punch mare brought to the event from Fair Winds Farm in Brat-

leboro, Vt., Jelmer Albada did extensive demonstrations and explanations of the Kockerling and Melotte tool carrier systems which he has brought to this country from Europe (and brought to the event courtesy of the trucking services of Donn Hewes). With a single horse as many as six rows of crop may be cultivated at one time. Jelmer hopes to bring these implements to the Horse Progress Days in Ohio next



Photo by Stephen Leslie

year so that the equipment manufacturers can get a good look at them. He feels that these tools may have a renewed life here in North America with the surge of interest in small-scale farming with draft power. Chuck Cox of Tuckaway Farm in Lee, NH, brought a truckload of equipment to the event, including the Homesteader from Pioneer Equipment in Dalton, OH. The Homesteader is a multi-tool carrier patterned on the McCormick-Deering riding cultivators, including the important feature of foot pedal steering, but it is much more than a cultivator and features an array of quick-change tools, including: 10" plow, disc harrows, hilling discs, and more. The Homesteader is scaled for management of a market garden in the range of 1-2 acres. Chuck brought along a farm-fabricated rotary hoe attachment to demonstrate the endless possibilities of this implement for any enterprising farmer with some welding skills.

The other new multi-tool carrier on display was the All-In-One from Ann Siri in Philo, CA. Ann sent her new implement to the Northeast so that folks here could have an opportunity to get a first-hand look at

what this versatile light-weight tool can do. The All-In-One is a walk-behind tool carrier designed for both single horse and teams. Like the Homesteader, it features an array of quick-change implements (sans the plow). It can be off-set when pulled by a single horse for cultivating a bed system, thus allowing for more



Photo by Jen Judkins

intensive cultivation than is usual in animal-powered systems. Because of its maneuverability this tool would also be ideal for introducing a horse or horses into tillage and cultivation inside of a high tunnel.

At Cedar Mountain Farm we have been cultivat-

ing the crops in our market garden with horses for fourteen years. For several years we relied on the single horse walk-behind cultivator. This is a wonderfully simple yet effective implement and has the advantage of a very easy mechanism for adjusting its width in the field. In recent years we expanded our garden from 3 to 4 acres and decided to experiment with the McCormick-Deering riding cultivator. This was a popular model and restored or restorable examples are still not too hard to find (Crossroads Cultivators is a company in Brogue, PA that specializes in restored McCormick cultivators and can also provide new replacement parts). Once we were successfully cultivating with this implement it only made sense to shift to marking out rows with it as well. Next, we acquired a second cultivator which we keep set up with disc hillier attachments for potatoes, sweet corn, and leeks.

There are several contemporary manufacturers producing excellent one, two, three, and even four row riding cultivators, but for my money no one has yet surpassed the practicality, durability, balance and

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Photo by Helena Gomberg photo

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versatility of the original New No.4 riding cultivator from McCormick-Deering. But don't take my word for it! Compare these tools for yourself. This is such an exciting time to be a horse farmer with ample choices of old and new implements to suit you, your horses, and your farm.



Photo by Jen Judkins

Note: The All-In-One that Ann Siri sent to the Field Days is now in residence at Cedar Mountain Farm in Hartland, VT. Anyone interested in having a look at it can contact Stephen Leslie at Fjordworks@yahoo.com or (802)-436-1448.

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NORTHEAST DRAFTWOOD: REGIONAL MARKETING OF RESTORATIVE ANIMAL-POWERED FORESTRY, PART II

In a previous article I discussed the development of a source-differentiated line of forest products from the practices of restorative forestry using draft animals, known as "Draftwood". When draft-animal powered loggers bring increased understanding and craftsmanship to their work, then the resulting forest products can have added value related to the implementation of methods addressing long-term environmental issues. The value of these products increases through the application of thoughtful standards, and eventually, a more holistic approach to forest management and timber harvest can become economically viable.



forestry objectives.

Practitioners following Draftwood standards can deliver legitimate forestry services through harvesting, providing investment in ecosystem services, biological productivity, timber-stand improvement, low site-disturbance, and craftsmanship, resulting in a naturally vibrant, financially productive, and aesthetically pleasing forest.

The Draftwood program creates a marketing strategy and system for all practitioners working within agreed-upon guidelines so that small-scale producers can gain market share through association. This system connects practitioners into a regional marketing group that benefits from sharing the same source-differentiated identity when selling forest products to consumers who support restorative forestry practices.

The environmental attributes associated with Draftwood forest management and harvesting methods

continued on page 9

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Ken Laing is cultivating using his Suffolk Punch horse

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After thirty years in the industry, most of that using draft animals in forestry, I am confident that the most effective way to implement sound ecological and forest improvement practices is by using draft animals. As a forestland owner and forestry consultant I am certain that harvesting practitioners with advanced skills in the implementation of silvicultural methods provide expert services that translate into valuable investments toward long-term multiple-use

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- Sue Mahany, Rural Vermont member, Burlington



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Draftwood, continued from page 7

are also marketable to consumers when secondary manufacturers agree to add a premium value to their finished product by using the Draftwood label. A percentage of the retail sale is then returned to support the work of Draftwood producers.

Marketing of source-differentiated forest products can be challenging because many end-users see no applicable difference compared to conventional products they use, so the added costs are hard to justify. This makes it difficult for timber harvesters to consider this process as a way to enhance their financial success, because draft animal loggers in the Northeast produce more logs than they can market as Draftwood. Their operational profitability is related to production expenses and conventional markets, so the potential return from the sale of Draftwood products is uncertain at best.

The economic incentive that drives most people to consider forest management applies logging as a source of revenue, with additional long-term objectives implemented only if they can be afforded. My personal philosophy is that logging is a silvicultural tool to be used as an investment in accomplishing long-term multiple-use objectives.

By focusing on infrastructure development, increasing productivity, improving residual growing stock, and protecting ecological integrity, logging becomes a service that justifies a dedicated expense. Owners, who want their lands to increase in value as ecologically sound and productive forests, are best served by harvesting practices that primarily focus on advancing those objectives.

Draftwood forest products can have no value if the woods-work is not first and foremost an authentic representation of restorative forestry. Draftwood producers not only adhere to standards that support these added values, but they must also be able to afford them in practice, as there is currently a very limited market for source-differentiated products, and the conventional logging industry doesn't inherently reward this type of workmanship.

To me, the key to making Draftwood into a successful program in the Northeast is the establishment of a network of "Biological Woodsmen", who are committed to working under an agreed upon set of standards that separate their work from conventional practices. This association will also serve to validate a change in the financial structure of draft animal powered timber harvest by supporting the profes-

sional application of methods based on principles of forest improvement and ecological integrity.

Our first line of profitability must come from customers who want to see their forestland improved under these principles. Only when the principles and standards are applied, can the attributes be authenticated to validate the premium value of Draftwood products. To do this we will have to change the way that forestry is being applied on lands where Biological Woodmen work. My business, Russell Forestry Service, is now operating as a Draftwood producer, with the ability to certify any timber harvest that I oversee, and I am willing to work with interested parties throughout the Northeast.

During the Spring of 2014 I will convene a Draft Animals in Forestry Summit, at a location yet to be determined, to discuss what is needed in order to establish a model that is effective and attractive to draft-loggers and their clients. The economic viability of NE Draftwood will require a network of practitioners doing authentic work, and this summit will be a critical first step.

In the Fall of 2014, in cooperation with Draft Animal Power Network, Russell Forestry Services will host a Biological Woodsmen's Week, also at a location yet to be determined. This event will be an opportunity for regional operators to work together on a legitimate forest improvement operation where they can reinforce their shared professional and social connections, and test, through use, the model and standards that will be established during our Spring summit.

For more information on becoming a Northeast Draftwood producer, or participating in the development of this program, contact Carl B. Russell, (802)234-5524, or earthwise@hughes.net.

NARROW GATE Farm The Perry Family

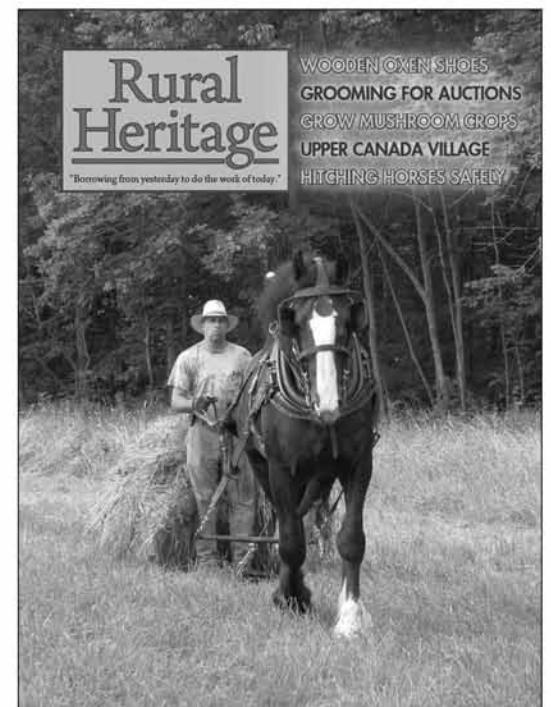
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Megan Phillips was nominated from the floor at the DAPNet annual meeting at the Field Days in September. She accepted and was voted onto the board where she is serving as secretary. Thank you for joining the DAPNet team, Megan!

Megan Phillips is the farm manager at Chewonki, an environmental education center in Wiscasset, Maine. The Chewonki farm focuses on both production and education and includes vegetable and livestock (chickens, pigs, sheep, and cows) production, all for the living and learning community at Chewonki. Additionally, the farm crew manages a 150 acre woodlot for firewood production. A single Belgian draft provides the main source of power in managing the gardens, pasture, and woodlot, and students are

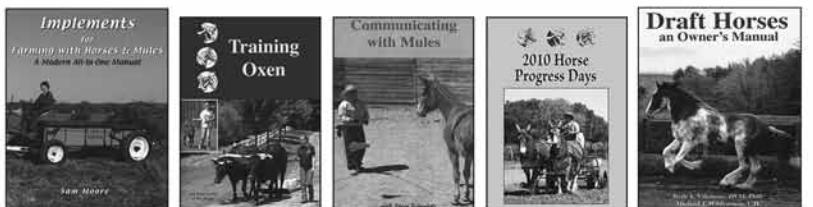
integrated into all aspects of the work. A native of the South, she studied elementary education at Furman University and earned her graduate degree in environmental education from the Audubon Expedition Institute. Before moving to Maine, Megan taught elementary school in South Carolina, led extended wilderness trips, and coordinated school gardening projects and farm education programs for Calypso Farm and Ecology Center in Ester, Alaska, where she lived for two years.



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FROM YOUR ADMINISTRATOR

It has been a wonderful year and DAPNet has seen some important growth and development of the organization! Financially, we are on track to finish the year ahead, which is particularly exciting given the financial challenge of putting together the DAP-Field Days. We have seen a significant increase in our membership numbers and as you all know, that is the base from which we can grow in our reach and depth of programming.

For me personally, it has been an exciting and challenging year. From getting married and enjoying the euphoria of a fantastic DAPField Days and a rewarding Doc Hammill clinic to the devastating losses of Neal's stallion Ben, in April, then in November his older brother Mark, it has been a year of incredible highs and deep lows. But God is faithful and His presence and comfort have steadied us through it all. In August Neal accepted a position as a pastor at a local church (with the condition that he not start until October!) so we begin another new journey. Through much thoughtful prayer I have decided that I can not renew my contract with DAPNet. I come to this decision with both sadness and relief and encouraged by knowing that I can continue to support DAPNet without being the administrator.

I will continue in this position until a replacement is found. I will be working with the board over the next month to refine the job description and begin advertising the position. Details will be available on the website so check in there for updates.

I look forward to seeing you all at events and around the DAPNet community. This is a wonderful group to be a part of and to work for, thanks to everyone's efforts & input. Thank you.

Rebekah A Perry

Sincerely,
Rebekah Perry

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