



Photo source: Jessica Reisdorf

Ag Focus

Cottonwood Farms – Winner of Two Environmental Stewardship Awards

By: Jerry Bertoldo

Paul and Jason Tillotson operate a 1,000 acre dairy in Pavilion, NY on the location where the family began farming in 1880. Today they milk 300 cows and raise all of their youngstock on the premises. Passing by the well maintained farmstead would not tell you how unique this operation is.

Cottonwood Farms is a successful organic dairy that has adopted as many new technologies as many larger conventional operations. The Tillotsons have intensively grazed since 1999 becoming certified organic in 2006. They have hosted many tours and pasture walks showcasing their improved laneways, water stations and grass management.

The farm raises all of its forages. They group house their calves, feeding them UV pasteurized milk with a robotic unit

for the past 5 years. In 2013 they installed robotic milkers and feed pushers, successfully blending intensive grazing and these labor saving technologies.

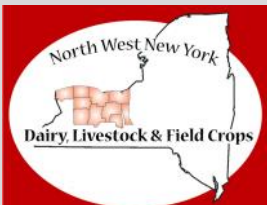
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Photo Source: Jerry Bertoldo



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Perhaps the most notable aspect of the farm is the attention to environmental details. A compost pack heifer barn, manure separation, liquid manure irrigation of pastures, manure solids used for bedding, no till seedings and accommodation for wildlife are management practices that have won them not one, but two environmental stewardship awards this year.

The Tillotsons were awarded the Environmental Stewardship Award by The American Dairy Association and Dairy Council as part of the “Dairying for Tomorrow” program for the Northeast. They recently received the acclamation at an award breakfast at the NYS State Fair. The ADADC will donate \$1,000 to the charity of their choice in the Tillotson’s name.

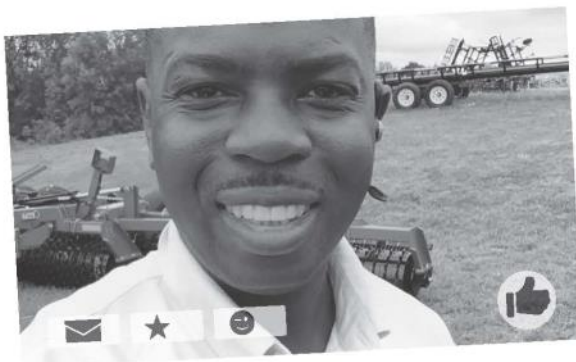
Horizon Organic field staff nominated the farm for one of their two national “Hope Awards” this year. Cottonwood received Horizon’s Environmental Stewardship Award and a fully paid trip to the Farm-Aid concert event in Virginia. A Horizon newsletter article will feature the farm later this year.



Photo Source: Jerry Bertoldo

We congratulate Paul, Jason, their family and dedicated employees for their superior efforts in protecting the environment, providing excellent cow comfort and being good neighbors.

LOVES



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