

**2016 Northeast Pasture Consortium Annual Conference & Meeting Proceedings held at the
Harraseeket Inn in Freeport, Maine, March 16-17**

Introduction

The Northeast Pasture Consortium held its twentieth anniversary conference in the State of Maine. This was the first time that we have held the annual conference in Maine. Our thanks goes to Diane Schivera, Maine Organic Gardeners and Farmers Association, for arranging to have the Harraseeket Inn host this year's annual conference. Sixty-eight people attended and participated in the Conference this year. This was 25 more people than last year. We had people from as far away as Oregon and Wisconsin and a Canadian forage researcher.

Our thanks goes to the Pennsylvania Grazing Lands Coalition, Organic Valley, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), and Organic Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) for monetary support of this conference. Without these funds, we would not have been able to pay all the bills with just the registration fees.

The Conference offered 10.5 continuing education credits to Certified Crop Advisors from ASA-CSSA-SSSA and 10 continuing education credits to Certified Forage and Grassland Professionals from the American Forage and Grassland Council.

For the first time we also held a post conference program. We toured the Wolfe's Neck Farm Organic Dairy Farmer Apprentice Program facility on Casco Bay near Freeport, Maine in the morning of March 18 and were given an introduction to how this program came into being at Wolfe's Neck Farm.

And, last but not least, another first was having exhibitors at our Conference. Organic Valley, King's AgriSeeds, and Barenbrug America brought displays of their products to the Conference.

James Cropper, Executive Director, opened the Conference by welcoming everyone to our twentieth anniversary conference. He gave a brief overview of what we hoped to accomplish at this conference and invited people who were staying over Thursday evening to attend the Wolfe's Neck Farm tour on Friday morning. He then asked everyone in attendance to introduce themselves one by one to the conference attendees with their name and affiliation. Once all the introductions took place, the sessions on the progress of pasture-based research, education, and technical assistance began.