

Opinion

Nominations sought for 2009 Master Agriculturist awards

THE *Wisconsin Agriculturist*, in partnership with Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, M&I Bank and Wisconsin Public Service, will once again honor four Wisconsin farmers who have demonstrated outstanding farm management skills while also taking active leadership roles in their communities.

The Master Agriculturist program has a rich history dating back 78 years to 1930 when the magazine first started honoring top Wisconsin farmers.

The *Wisconsin Agriculturist* is looking for the best of the best. It's a wonderful opportunity to recognize those farmers who have excelled and can serve as an inspiration to others.

How to apply

Nomination forms are available online at www.WisconsinAgriculturist.com. To have a nomination form mailed to you, call the *Wisconsin Agriculturist* editorial office at 920-346-8333.

Winners will be selected by a committee of industry leaders and will be honored at a luncheon held

at the Hilton Garden Inn during the Wisconsin Public Service Farm Show March 31 through April 2 at the EAA grounds in Oshkosh.

Winners will be featured in the April issue of *Wisconsin Agriculturist*.

Deadline for nominations is Dec. 1.



Letters of recommendation help strengthen the nomination and should be included.

Past winners will be invited to attend the Master Agriculturist Awards Program.

So take a few minutes and nominate somebody you believe should receive the award. Anybody can nominate a farmer

or write a recommendation including family members, neighbors, friends, Extension agents, bankers or industry representatives.

Return nomination forms to: *Wisconsin Agriculturist*, 102 E. Jefferson St., P.O. Box 236, Brandon, WI 53919. Those who are nominated and do not receive the award in 2009 will be automatically considered in 2010.

Your Say

Organic Valley's management compromised reputation

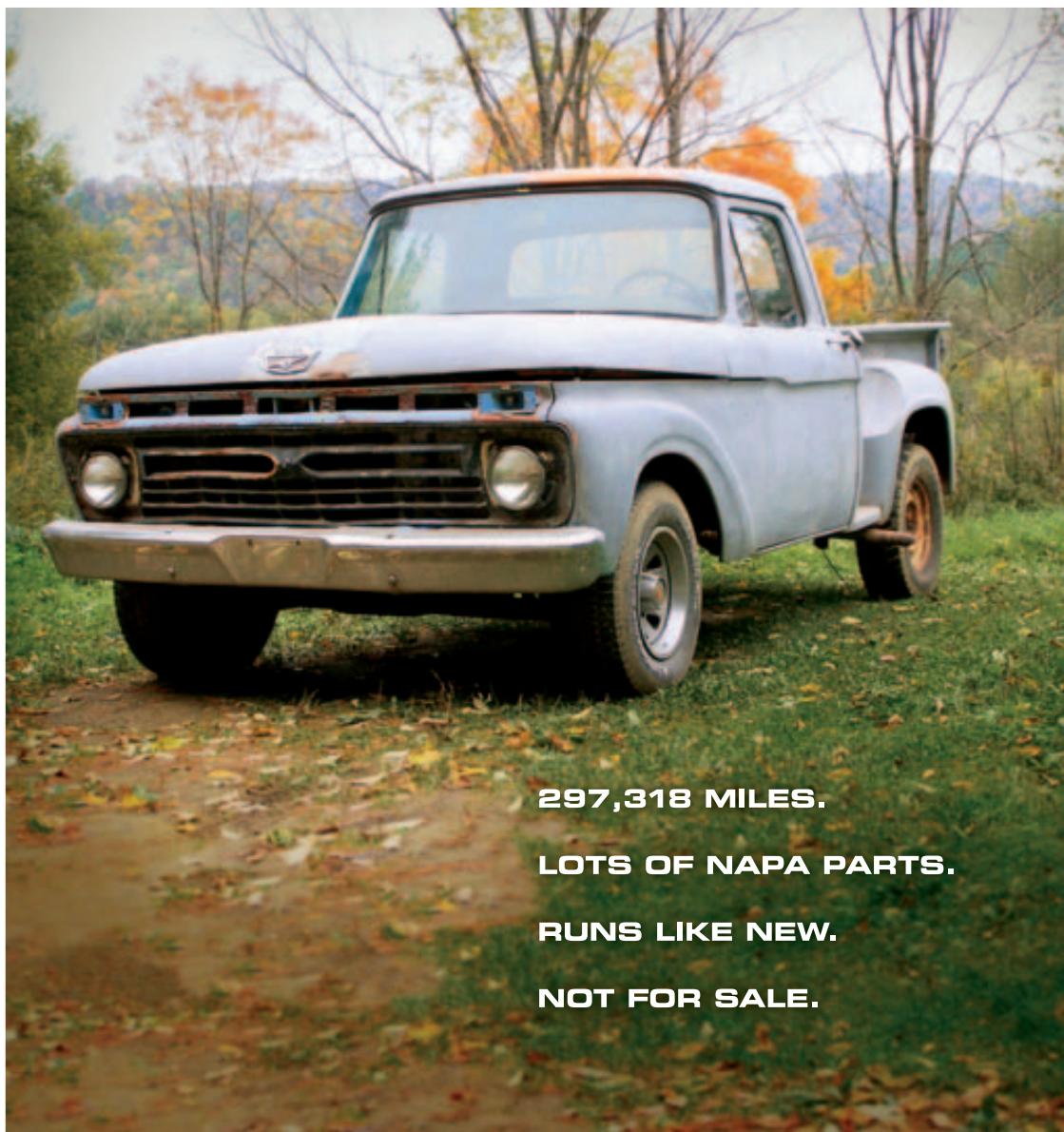
Your opinion column "Organic Valley taints its reputation" (September 2008) makes some very valid points. Unfortunately your first paragraphs are off the mark; milk is not milk. Milk from pastured cattle is not the same as milk produced by confined cattle. "Full-fat milk produced by cows that are fed corn has three to five times less conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) than the milk of grass-fed cows," according to Utah State University dairy scientist Tilak R. Dhiman, Ph.D.

In general, omega-6 fatty acid levels were higher in milk from pastured cattle, but specifically, CLAs are important because of their anticarcinogenic properties.

Statistically there is no difference between CLA levels in organic or non-organic milk. Pasture is the key. This is one reason why buyers of organic milk are willing to pay more for, as you say, milk "produced by family farmers in harmony with nature without antibiotics, synthetic hormones or pesticides." Many of those attributes are quite intangible, but for many they do have considerable value.

Now we come to the betrayal of trust. You are correct, there was a violation of trust. Who violated the trust is the question. Organic Valley farmer-members were not pleased to find out that their cooperative was buying milk from a 7,200-cow dairy. They told management to stop, management delayed, but finally acquiesced. So, I think the violation of trust lies strictly with Organic Valley management, not its farmers. They continued to produce milk as they always have, following strict, documented standards. Why management chose to compromise the good name of their farmers beats me. Money? Power?

Jim Goodman, Wonewoc



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