

PDPW

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Dairy's Bottom Line

National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative



As dairy producers in the United States, we enjoy a high level of consumer confidence. The recently announced National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative (NDAWI) aims to keep it that way.

In December of 2005, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin board of directors identified animal welfare as a priority issue for our organization and for the dairy industry. Little did we know that our leadership on that cold December day would lead to a national effort to define a solution for the animal well-being issue that will protect our freedom to operate by demonstrating our commitment to care for our animals.

At the 2007 World Dairy Expo, the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative was publicly launched. PDPW was the catalyst and facilitator for this effort. We have been joined by strong industry partners who have helped build our path to success.

In this edition of Dairy's Bottom Line, you will learn more about what the Initiative is and how it will work. It is important to note that the NDAWI is not another on-farm animal welfare program. Many regional cooperatives, associations and independent companies have already established their own programs. Creating national principles and guidelines that should be included in all programs helps provide customers the assurance they seek.

We're proud of the work that has been done, and now it's your turn to shape this Initiative. We're confident that you, other producers and leaders will help protect our freedom to operate by embracing the work of the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative. We encourage you to review the principles and guidelines and share your feedback by June 30 online at www.dairywellbeing.org. This initiative belongs to all dairy producers and your input is very important.

By taking action now, the dairy industry can lead this issue, lessen the potential for unnecessary regulation and show our commitment to animal well-being.

Complete information about the NDAWI and the information to share feedback on the draft principles and guidelines can be found at www.dairywellbeing.org.

Sincerely,
PDPW Board of Directors

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What Is the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative?

The National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative was established by a broad based group of volunteers from across the country representing every facet of the dairy industry.

The goal of the Initiative is to provide assurance that the entire industry is meeting its obligation to provide appropriate care for our dairy animals.

The volunteer Coalition includes dairy producers, processors, co-ops, retailers, ag lenders, researchers and veterinarians.

To accomplish the goal, the volunteer Coalition is developing broad principles and guidelines that any dairy welfare program should include to meet our ethical obligation to provide for the well-being of our animals.

WHY ARE WE CONCERNED?

The well-being of livestock on U.S. farms is an increasingly important issue to our customers and other stakeholders. Although dairy animal well-being is not currently a top-of-mind consumer concern, recent developments in animal welfare activism directed at other species (especially swine and poultry) are a signal that our industry could receive more attention in the very near future.

The dairy industry is fortunate because consumers currently have a relatively high level of trust and confidence in dairy producers. It is imperative that we come together to maintain and enhance that trust and to protect our freedom to operate. To do this, we must



actively demonstrate that we recognize our ethical obligation to care for our animals and, most importantly, have effective and consistent programs to ensure we meet that obligation.

One of the great strengths of the dairy industry is the diversity of our regional co-ops, associations and independent companies. Many of these organizations have already established, or are in the process of establishing, welfare programs.

It is imperative that we maintain the strength our diverse industry structure provides. However, a key challenge to this structure, especially when it comes to animal well-being, is the lack of a uniform national umbrella that ensures con-

sistency of programs across the country. And that's where we need your help, commitment and involvement.

PROVING OUR COMMITMENT

The announcement of the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative at World Dairy Expo marked the beginning of the coalition's work.

Through July 1, dairy producers will have an opportunity to review the draft principles and guidelines and provide input through their co-op or industry association. The coalition will incorporate industry feedback into the final principles and guidelines.

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Executive Summary

The ethical obligations associated with dairy production include a strong emphasis on animal well-being. As science and practical experience expand our understanding of dairy animal well-being, producers continue to improve animal care and management practices. The National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative has developed broad principles and guidelines that dairy animal well-being programs should include to meet our ethical obligations. These principles and guidelines are summarized here and expanded in the remainder of this document.

NUTRITION

Guiding Principle: Animals and animal groups should always have non-competitive access to a nutritionally adequate diet and clean, fresh water.

Guideline for Newborn Calves: Calves should receive colostrum or equivalent and be fed in a way that promotes health and minimizes the risk of disease.

Guideline for Weaned Calves and Growing Heifers: Weaned calves and growing heifers should receive adequate nutrition and water to achieve a proper body condition score and be fed in a way that promotes health and minimizes the risk of disease.

Guideline for Adult Cows: Adult cows should receive adequate nutrition and water to achieve a proper body condition score and be fed in a way that promotes

health and minimizes the risk of disease including metabolic diseases.

Guideline for Dairy Bulls: Bulls should receive adequate nutrition and water to achieve a proper body condition score and be fed in a way that promotes health and minimizes the risk of disease.

ANIMAL HEALTH

Guiding Principle: The health of all animals and animal groups should be maintained through preventive care programs augmented by rapid diagnosis and treatment when necessary.

Guidelines: Dairy operations should have:

- A valid Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR)
- A current herd health plan
- Appropriate euthanasia guidelines and training
- Management protocols for painful procedures and conditions
- Management protocols for special needs animals

MANAGEMENT

Guiding Principle: To promote animal well-being animal caretakers should be appropriately trained, follow protocols and have access to record systems.

Guidelines: The operation should have a herd health plan as well as training and protocols for handling, transporting and caring for special-needs cattle includ-

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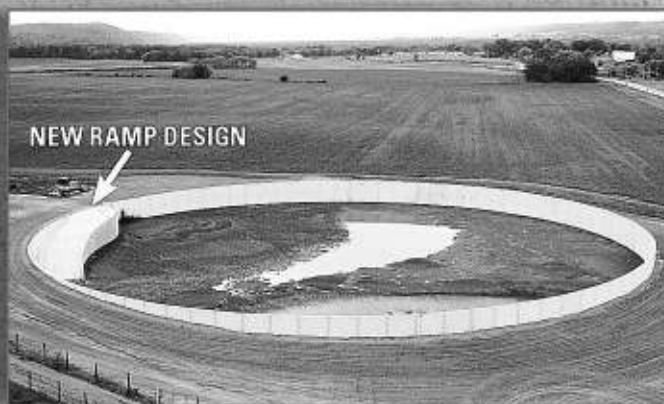
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ing euthanasia. The plan should include:

- Training for new employees plus refresher training for existing employees
- Standard operating procedures to be reviewed annually and revised as necessary
- An emergency management plan
- Record keeping
- Management effectiveness

HOUSING AND FACILITIES

Guiding Principle: Facilities should be designed, constructed and maintained to provide and promote animal health, comfort and safety.

Guidelines for Calves (Birth to Weaning or Sale) and Young Stock (Weaning to Parturition or Sale): Calves and young stock should be given adequate space to stand, lie down, and turn around without difficulty, provided bedding that is clean and dry and be protected from seasonal weather extremes.

Guidelines for Adult Animals: Adult animals should be given adequate space to stand and lie down, be provided bedding that is clean and dry and be protected from seasonal weather extremes. Facility design and maintenance should be adequate to prevent injury and the development of leg lesions.

Guidelines for Herd Bulls: Herd bulls should be evaluated under the same guidelines as young stock.

HANDLING, MOVEMENT, AND TRANSPORTATION

Guiding Principle: All animals and animal groups should be handled, moved and transported in a manner that minimizes behavior modification and the potential for injury, discomfort or disease.

Guideline: Facilities should be designed and maintained so animals can be moved in a manner that prevents slips, falls and collisions. Employees should be trained to follow appropriate handling, movement and transportation protocols.

THIRD PARTY OVERSIGHT

Guiding Principle: Verifying on-farm dairy animal well-being requires third party oversight.

Guideline: Dairy animal well-being programs should include third party oversight to verify the program meets the principles and guidelines established by the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Coalition to demonstrate our commitment to meeting our ethical obligation to provide for the well-being of animals in the U.S. dairy industry.

Introduction

The face of agriculture continuously changes through the advancement of technology and public policy. For the last two decades the introduction of technology, the increase in the size of operations and the focus on efficient production has helped improve productivity, control costs and enhance food safety. The general public is less familiar with the modern food production system because of these changes.



Photo courtesy of the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board

As a result, animal agriculture no longer enjoys the same level of public trust our predecessors took for granted. Producers today must demonstrate they are ethically and socially responsible as well as scientifically grounded in the care of their operations, animals, workers and the environment. When consumers question animal agriculture practices, the industry has responded almost exclusively with science-based answers. Such responses are often viewed by the public as non-responsive because they don't communicate the commitment to ethical principles and shared values. Today, agriculture must add ethics to science to build the trust needed with the critical stakeholders who grant the social license to operate.

Even though the dairy industry enjoys a high level of consumer trust and confidence, we recognize there is a growing disconnect between consumers and producers. To protect the high level of trust currently held by consumers regarding the dairy industry, the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Coalition was formed.

The Coalition, a broad-based group of agricultural leaders from across the country, joined forces and developed the Initiative. The Initiative provides assurance to build consumer trust and confidence that the industry is meeting its ethical and moral obligation to care for its animals. By acting now, the Initiative provides the opportunity to have a say in our destiny, protect markets and preserve market access by demonstrating our commitment to animal well-being. Simply put, the Initiative is a testament to our industry's commitment to "do the right thing" regarding animal well-being.

The Coalition has worked to create a set of principles and guidelines that can be incorporated into any dairy animal well-being program. This is not a new on-farm well-being program. It is a uniform umbrella of principles and guidelines, including third party oversight, that will help build trust with critical stakeholders by demonstrating an industry-wide commitment to ani-

Go to www.dairywellbeing.org to comment on these proposed Principles and Guidelines before July 1. You will also find complete references for these materials on the website.

mal well-being and ensure program consistency across the country.

In the pages that follow are the proposed NDAWI Principles and Guidelines authored by members of the Principles and Guidelines committee. They are in draft form. Over the next several months, producer comments and input will be solicited by circulating them throughout the industry.

Summary of the Process

Since late 2005, more than 60 people have been involved with the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Coalition in formulating the Initiative. The Coalition is a broad based group of volunteers from across the country representing every facet of the dairy industry. It includes producers, processors, co-ops, allied industry, academics, associations and others. The Coalition is not part of any specific association or organization, but a group that reflects the diversity and strength of the U.S. dairy industry.



Photo courtesy of the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board

In addition to individual dairy producers, other industry leaders participating in the Coalition, or contributing in some way, include: Alto Dairy, American Association of Bovine Practitioners, American Farm Bureau Federation, Animart, American Foods Group, Cornell University, Dairy Farmers of America, Dairy Management Inc., Elanco Animal Health, Foremost Farms USA, Grande Cheese Company, International Dairy Foods Association, Land O' Lakes, Inc., Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center Inc., Morgan&Myers, National Milk Producers Federation, Northeast Dairy Producers Association, Organic Valley, Pfizer Animal Health, Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO), Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin, Rabobank, Rosenholm Wolfe Dairy LLP, Safeway Inc., Smithfield Beef Group, United Dairymen of Arizona, University of Arizona, University of California-Davis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Validus, Washington Dairy Products Commission, Washington State Dairy Federation, WestfaliaSurge, Inc., Wisconsin Livestock Identification

Consortium, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, Wisconsin Pork Producers Association.

To date, these leader-volunteers have attended the Initiative development meetings at their own expense and have donated their time to the development of the Initiative.

As mentioned in the introduction, the Initiative is not another on-farm animal well-being program. The Initiative will capitalize on the strengths of the already established animal well-being programs promoted by the dairy co-ops, associations and companies by setting forth uniform well-being principles and guidelines.

Producers will be asked to sign an endorsement form formally indicating their support for the Initiative. Producers may be asked to participate in an on-farm animal well-being program that incorporates the principles and guidelines developed by the Coalition. The decision to participate in an on-farm animal well-being program is strictly up to the producer and their co-op or marketing partner.

Upon completion of the year-long producer-review of the proposed Principles and Guidelines, the Coalition will evaluate the recommendations and proceed to an approved and final document.

NUTRITION

Guiding Principle: Animals and animal groups should always have non-competitive access to a nutritionally adequate diet and clean, fresh water.

Guideline for Newborn Calves: Calves should receive colostrum or equivalent and be fed in a way that promotes health and minimizes the risk of disease.

Background: Dairy calves are born with no natural immunity and depend on the immunoglobulins in colostrum to provide passive immune protection. Colostrum is the milk produced right after calving and is a better source of immunoglobulins, protein, fat, minerals and vitamins than milk. The concentration of these nutrients is usually highest in the first milk produced after calving and decreases with subsequent milkings. The calf has the ability to absorb the immunoglobulins directly from the digestive tract into the blood. The ability of the calf to absorb these antibodies decreases rapidly starting within the first 24 hours after birth.

Guideline for Weaned Calves and Growing Heifers: Weaned calves and growing heifers should receive adequate nutrition and water to achieve a proper body condition score and be fed in a way that promotes health and minimizes the risk of disease.

Background: The goal is to provide adequate nutrition to meet targets for weight at a specific age. A series of rations may be fed during this time period. The National Research Council (NRC, 2001) publication is a good guide for developing rations for these groups.

Guideline for Adult Cows: Adult cows should receive adequate nutrition and water to achieve a proper body condition score and be fed in a way that promotes health and minimizes the risk of disease including metabolic diseases.

Background Dry Cows: Dry (non-lactating) cows are usually housed and fed separately from the milking cows.

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The rations for these animals should provide nutrients required to support fetal calf growth. The current (NRC, 2001) publication is a good guide for the nutrient requirements of these animals.

Background Milking Cows: These animals may be housed and fed in a number of different groups depending on the grouping strategy used on the farm. Rations should be formulated to meet the needs of each group. Using the appropriate requirement information (NRC, 2001) can help achieve that goal. The same ration may be fed to more than one group when the nutritional specifications are similar. Labor and management considerations will also help determine the number of rations fed.

Background Special Needs Cows: There may be situations in which cows need to be observed for veterinary care. It is important to provide access to clean water and a balanced ration while cows are in this area. A key factor is to provide a non-competitive environment for these animals.

Guideline for Dairy Bulls: Bulls should receive adequate nutrition and water to achieve a proper body condition score and be fed in a way that promotes health and minimizes the risk of disease.

ANIMAL HEALTH

Guiding Principle: The health of all animals and animal groups should be maintained through preventive care programs augmented by rapid diagnosis and treatment when necessary.

Guidelines: Dairy operations should have:

- A valid Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship (VCPR)
- A current herd health plan
- Appropriate euthanasia guidelines and training
- Management protocols for painful procedures and conditions

- Management protocols for special needs animals

Background: The health of animals on a dairy is an essential part of good husbandry and a well-being program. One of the foundations for animal well-being is the freedom from pain, injury or disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment. A dairy maintains the health of the animals by providing appropriate nutrition, housing and disease prevention, detection and action programs. These programs should be developed through consultation with a qualified veterinarian.

A dairy well-being audit will determine that these programs are in place and functioning by evaluating at least the following areas:

- A Valid Veterinary-Client-Patient Relationship demonstrates that the dairy uses a veterinarian for health and disease issues and allows the dairy to obtain and use appropriate drugs.
- The dairy should have a written Herd Health Plan(s), developed in consultation with the herd veterinarian, to prevent common diseases such as mastitis, lameness, metritis, metabolic diseases, displaced abomasum and

other infectious diseases such as pneumonia and infectious diarrhea. The Herd Health Plan should include:

1. Vaccination protocols
2. Daily observation of all animals for injury or signs of disease
3. Action plans for animals that develop disease or are injured
4. Protocols for prevention, detection and action for mastitis and lameness
5. Training programs for family members and employees involved in detecting disease and injury, reporting the cases and actions to be taken

• Euthanasia is appropriate, when an animal's quality of life is decreased or when pain and suffering cannot be alleviated. The method of euthanasia must be consistent with recommendations from the American Veterinary Medical Association and the American Association of Bovine Practitioners. The euthanasia plan should be carried out regularly and consistently and should include:

1. Education of farm staff on the need for euthanasia and recognition of animals to be euthanized
 2. Proper technique
 3. Confirm death of animal
 4. Record keeping of euthanized animals
 5. Disposal of carcasses
- The dairy must have a plan for handling non-ambulatory cattle, including calves, which cannot stand or walk without assistance. The non-ambulatory cattle plan should include:

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1. Proper movement so that the animal is not dragged
2. Husbandry and nursing care that provides shelter, water, feed and isolation from other cattle and protection from predators
3. Appropriate medical care
4. Euthanasia if warranted

MANAGEMENT

Guiding Principle: To promote animal well-being animal caretakers should be appropriately trained, follow protocols and have access to record systems.

Guidelines: The operation should have a herd health plan as well as training and protocols for handling, transporting and caring for special-needs cattle including euthanasia. The plan should include:

- Training for new employees plus refresher training for existing employees
- Standard operating procedures to be reviewed annually and revised as necessary
- An emergency management plan
- Record keeping
- Management effectiveness

Background: When addressing management, it is important to describe it, do it, document it and deem it correct. Although oral directions are acceptable as long as all employees are conducting the protocol and procedure in the same manner, written protocols are encouraged. In the absence of a key employee, the written information would benefit another employee stepping in to assist. Much of the information in this section is interdependent on criteria in other sections and/or animal observations.

A dairy well-being audit will determine that these programs are in place and functioning by evaluating at least the following areas:

- Herd Health Plan
 1. The dairy has a written Herd Health Plan(s) (see the corresponding section on Animal Health for additional information).
- Housing
 1. All Facilities should be designed, constructed and maintained to provide and promote animal health, comfort and safety (see the corresponding section on Housing and Facilities for additional information).
- Special Needs Management
 1. Record keeping should be current and animal treatment records accessible to employees.
 2. Protocol should prescribe euthanasia for animals with less than a 2.0 body condition score and not responding to treatment.
 3. Protocol should exist to minimize animal discomfort and optimize animal recovery following surgery, illness or injury (including care for downer animals).
 4. Personnel are trained to move downer animals.
 5. Proper equipment such as a sled or bucket-loader should be available to move downer animals. The equipment must be large enough to accommodate the animal and not allow body contact with the ground.
 6. Standard operating procedures should be available to all employees regarding downer animals.
 7. Caretakers should be trained on downer animal procedure.
 8. All employees should be trained in proper euthana-



Photo courtesy of the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board

sia techniques.

9. The protocol for terminally sick or severely injured, and untreatable, calves should include euthanasia on a regular and consistent basis.

- Handling, Movement, and Transportation (see the corresponding section on Handling, Movement, and Transportation for additional information).

1. All employees should be trained in animal handling to protect the safety of the animal and caretaker. Consequences of inhumane handling must be known and enforced.

2. All training should be documented and signed by the employee including the date completed, content and trainer.

3. When moving animals, the use of prods (electric or otherwise) should be limited to emergencies.

4. All non-employees handling cattle on-site are subject to the same criteria regarding use of prods, downer movement, etc.

5. Equipment used to transport animals should be inspected on a regular basis in order to protect livestock from injury.

- Management

1. The mission statement should include a commit-

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Go to www.dairywellbeing.org to comment on these proposed Principles and Guidelines before July 1. You will also find complete references for these materials on the website.



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ment to animal well-being. This message should be reiterated throughout the operation as it shows management's commitment to animal care.

2. All personnel should be trained in their job responsibilities with regard to animal care (flight zones, movement, etc.).

3. All protocols should be written, and posted, in the employee's native language.

4. The farm should have a written emergency contact sheet that is immediately accessible to employees including emergency phone contacts, directions to the hospital, full address of the property or 911 addresses, etc. This contact sheet is in addition to the emergency action plan which details what to do in case of a fire, natural disaster, etc.

HOUSING AND FACILITIES

Guiding Principle: Facilities should be designed, constructed and maintained to provide and promote animal health, comfort and safety.

Background: Facilities include all housing structures, handling structures, lots, pens, stalls, alleys and pastures that are inhabited by cattle of any age and health status. Facilities should provide sufficient protection from temperature extremes. Feed and water should be provided within an area that is accessible to cattle in the facility. The structural integrity of the facility should not compromise the safety and well-being of the animals.

Guidelines for Calves (Birth to Weaning or Sale)

and Young Stock (Weaning to Parturition or Sale): Calves and young stock should be given adequate space to stand, lie down, and turn around without difficulty, provided bedding that is clean and dry and be protected from seasonal weather extremes.

Background for Calves (Birth to Weaning or Sale): Calf hygiene should be scored on a point system as described by the New York State Cattle Health Assurance Program (NYSCHAP) (2002) and Fulwider et al. (2007) and used as an indicator of pen and facility cleanliness. Feed and water should be available at all times. Calf death loss should be used as an indicator of calf care quality. Colostrum, or a colostrum replacement, should be fed within the first 24 hours following parturition to promote immune system development (Stull & McDonough, (1994), Grandin, (2007)). Calves should be given shade and shelter from direct sunlight.

Background for Young Stock (Weaning to Parturition or Sale): Young stock should be provided with adequate space to stand, lie down, and turn around without difficulty. All animals should have access to water at all times. They should be supplied with ample feed to maintain body condition scores greater than 2 in 90% of the herd with no more than 3% of animals below body condition score 1 (Grandin, 2007). All lanes and alleys should be maintained to avoid cattle movement through extreme mud, water, etc. in inclement weather. Animal hygiene should be scored as an indicator of bedding area and travel lane cleanliness. A scoring system has been

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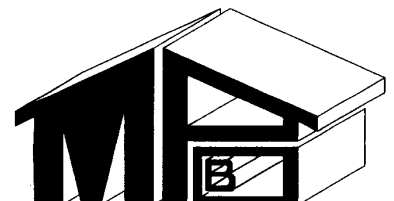
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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

described by NYSCHAP (2002) and Fulwider et al. (2007). Young stock death loss should be used as an indicator of care quality. Areas of high traffic should be covered with a nonslip surface. Slips and falls are indicators of traffic surface quality. Grandin (2007) cites a slip score of greater than 1% and/or falls greater than 0% as indicators of improper handling, poor travel surface or both.

Guidelines for Adult Animals: Adult animals should be given adequate space to stand and lie down, be provided bedding that is clean and dry and be protected from seasonal weather extremes. Facility design and maintenance should be adequate to prevent injury and the development of leg lesions.

Background for Adult Animals: Fulwider et al. (2007) describes a scoring system for leg lesions. Animals should be supplied with non-slip flooring in high traffic areas such as parlor entrances, exit lanes or areas where slips and falls are more likely. In addition, cow hygiene should be scored as described by Fulwider et al. (2007) as an indicator of facility hygiene. Locomotion scores as described by NYSCHAP (2002) should also be used to determine foot and leg health. Electric stall trainers, commonly used to reduce back arching during defecation and urination, should never make continuous contact with animals. Animals should have access to water at all times and feed in adequate quantity to maintain body condition scores greater than 2 in 90% of the herd with no more than 3% of cows below body condition score 1 (Grandin, 2007). Animals should also have the ability to lie down at any time when inhabiting the bedding area. Facilities need to be maintained in a manner that reduces the risk of animal collision with protruding objects such as broken boards or rails and protruding nails. Grandin (2007) outlines a simple method of accessing lameness prevalence, which can be an indicator of facility deficiencies.

Guidelines for Herd Bulls: Herd bulls should be evaluated under the same guidelines as young stock.

HANDLING, MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORTATION

Guiding Principle: All animals and animal groups should be handled, moved and transported in a manner that minimizes behavior modification and the potential for injury, discomfort or disease.

Guideline: Facilities should be designed and maintained so animals can be moved in a manner that prevents slips, falls and collisions. Employees should be trained to follow appropriate handling, movement and transportation protocols.

Background for Non-Ambulatory Animals: Although generally not common on farms, animals can become non-ambulatory for numerous reasons which range from acute injury, such as a broken leg or nerve damage from calving to attenuating illness or severe lameness. When an animal becomes non-ambulatory, the potential for recovery must be assessed. Animals that are likely to recover should be moved to an area with adequate bedding, access to feed and water, with no risk of trampling by other animals and with appropriate shel-

ter from direct sunlight or inclement weather. Non-ambulatory animals that cannot be carried should be moved with an appropriate sled, sling or bucket with the exception of cases where an animal absolutely must be moved a short distance before an appropriate movement aid can be used (e.g., if a cow becomes non-ambulatory in the parlor). Animals should not be pulled, dragged, or otherwise moved through force applied directly to the animal. The prognosis of the animal should be considered before the decision is made to move an animal. If the animal is highly unlikely to become ambulatory again, and/or has been treated with drugs that have a long withdrawal period before slaughter with little chance of recovery, it should be euthanized and then moved to prevent unnecessary pain and suffering. Farms should have a plan for dealing with non-ambulatory animals. This would likely be a part of the herd health plan.

Background for Euthanasia: Euthanasia may be necessary on animals with a terminal prognosis that are unfit for slaughter. Euthanasia should be performed in a manner consistent with the standards set by the American Association of Bovine Practitioners. The following methods of euthanasia are acceptable:

- Gunshot
- Captive bolt
- Barbiturate overdose
- Electrocutation
- Exsanguination preceded by any of the above

Euthanasia by blunt force trauma such as a hammer blow, exsanguination without stunning, injection of air or chemicals that would cause a painful death, or electrocutation with wall current are not acceptable methods.

Background for Handling Facilities (Including Parlor and Loading/Transport Facilities): Handling

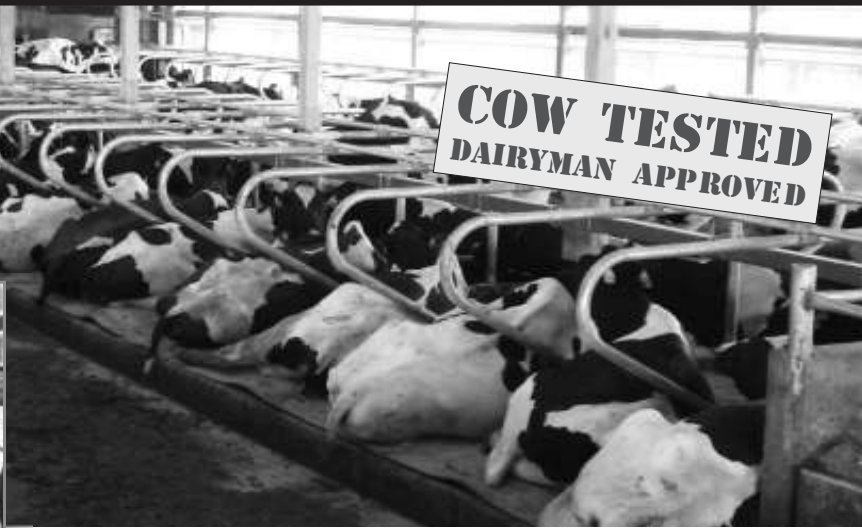
CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



Photo courtesy of the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board

Go to www.dairywellbeing.org to comment on these proposed Principles and Guidelines before July 1. You will also find complete references for these materials on the website.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

facilities, including trailers, must be well maintained and free of objects that may cause bruising such as broken boards or rails or improperly adjusted parlor rails. Vocalization can also be scored in these areas as an indicator of facility or handling issues. All loading and transport facilities should be equipped with non-slip flooring. This is especially important in breeding age animals to prevent injury when riding. Grandin (2007) recommends audit failure if 1% of cows slip and fall in the parlor.

Recommended loading densities of trucks and parlor holding pens range from 12 square feet per head for 1,000 pound animals to 18 square feet per head for 1,400 pound animals (Grandin, 1981). These densities are not the absolute standard and must be adjusted for calves and special needs animals.

Background for Cattle Handling and Movement: Animals are to be handled in a calm, controlled, and gentle manner. Employees should be properly trained in animal handling and the consequences of inhumane handling should be known and enforced. Handlers should be assessed and retrained on a regular basis. Prods, canes and other extreme cattle handling aids are rarely necessary and should only be used in situations that may potentially cause harm to the handler or the animals. Animals should be moved in a manner that produces less than 1% slips and falls. If this threshold is exceeded, handling and facilities should be evaluated and corrective action should be taken.

Background for Animal Fitness for Transport: Animals that have a doubtful chance of reaching the harvest facility in an ambulatory state should be treated or

ethanized at the farm. High risk animals include those with body condition scores of 1, animals that are severely lame and animals that have experienced nerve damage due to parturition. If an animal is likely to experience difficulty walking up the ramp to board a trailer, it is unlikely the animal will remain ambulatory for the entire trip unless special measures such as the addition of bedding or transporting the animal in a smaller trailer with lower stocking density are provided.

THIRD PARTY OVERSIGHT

Guiding Principle: Verifying on-farm dairy animal well-being requires third party oversight.

Guideline: All dairy animal well-being programs should include third party oversight to verify the program meets the principles and guidelines established by the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Coalition to demonstrate our commitment to meeting our ethical obligation to provide for the well-being of animals in the U.S. dairy industry.

Background: Third party oversight demonstrates credibility to our stakeholders. Verification requires participation by someone who does not have a financial interest in the operation or the outcome of the verification process. There are many forms of third party oversight. Some use a quality control model that verifies a statistical sample of participants to assure the overall program is achieving the intended outcome. Others may use different methods. Whatever method is used, the program must demonstrate that it is meeting our ethical obligation and that performance is verified by some type of third party oversight.

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NDAWI: Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative?

A: The National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative is a producer-led effort to build consumer trust and confidence in the dairy industry's commitment to animal well-being. We want to protect our freedom to operate by demonstrating that we recognize our ethical obligation to care for our animals and that we have programs in place to meet that obligation. We want to create an umbrella of well-being principles and guidelines that will provide uniform validation of our commitment regardless of which dairy well-being program a producer uses.

Q: How will this work?

A: The National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative Coalition is developing the broad principles and guidelines that any dairy well-being program should include to meet our ethical obligation to provide for the well-being of our animals. This is NOT another on-farm animal well-being program. One of the great strengths of the dairy industry is our robust regional co-ops, associations and independent companies. Many of these organizations have already established, or are in the process of establishing, well-being programs. We want to capitalize on the strength of our regional organizations and still provide assurance to our national stakeholders that the entire industry is meeting our obliga-

tion to provide appropriate care for our animals by having a uniform national umbrella of well-being principles and guidelines.

Through July 1, industry stakeholders, including co-ops and producer groups, will have an opportunity to review the draft principles and guidelines and provide feedback. Once the review is complete, these principles and guidelines can provide validation that the various programs that exist meet our obligation to provide appropriate care. This would be done by comparing the elements of individual programs against the principles and guidelines.

Q: Who is on the Coalition doing this work?

A: The Coalition is a broad based group of volunteers from across the country representing every facet of the dairy industry. It includes producers, processors, co-ops, allied industry, academics, associations and others. More than 60 people have been involved in the work of the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative since late 2005. The Coalition is not part of any specific association or organization, but a group that reflects the diversity and strength of the U.S. dairy industry.

In addition to individual dairy producers, other industry leaders participating in the Coalition, or contributing

SEE QUESTIONS, ON PAGE 19

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"I think it is very important for the producers in the dairy industry to lead and navigate their way through public related issues rather than being forced. Being proactive and aware of the public concerns surrounding the dairy industry will help the producers address concerns before they are detrimental to the success and growth of the dairy industry."

~Sarah Rust, Smithfield Beef Group

Now Is the Time For Producers to Educate Consumers

Now, more than ever, is the time for dairy producers to educate and share with consumers their devotion to the industry that they are so deeply passionate about. Producers make caring for their animals the No. 1 priority on their list in order to provide consumers with safe and wholesome products they can trust.

As the face of the agriculture industry has changed through advanced technology and public policy, the general public has become less familiar with the modern food production system. This has created a growing disconnection between producers and consumers.

In order to protect the high level of trust consumers hold in the dairy industry, the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Coalition was formed. This Coalition composed of a broad group

of agricultural leaders from across the country, joined forces to develop the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative. The initiative was created to provide assurance in building consumer trust and confidence in producers in meeting their ethical and moral obligation to care for their animals.

"The National Dairy Well-Being Initiative is an initiative that allows dairy producers to take the helm on such a valuable issue as animal welfare," says Kevin Murphy of Food-Chain Communications, an organization created in 2007 with the intent of helping those who touch the food supply communicate more effectively.

"Right now there is intense scrutiny on what is going on with food – how it's handled, how it's cared for, how it's transported," says

Murphy. "By taking this step and being proactive, we're doing something initially, rather than waiting to react."

Being proactive gives the dairy industry the opportunity to observe what other industries have suffered from and learn through the mistakes that they have made so that the dairy industry does not fall under the same category, he says.

"It's a very valuable step for the dairy industry," says Murphy.

The dairy industry is continually progressing and as operations continue to expand to become more efficient in production, it is important to continue to educate consumers.

"As dairy continues to grow, the opportunity that lies there is for producers to be able to show to the world

SEE EDUCATE, ON PAGE 20



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Land O' Lakes Key Player in NDAWI

A key player in the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative (NDAWI) is Land O' Lakes. The St. Paul, Minn.-based cooperative is one of many members of a coalition that backs a set of principles and guidelines for the treatment of dairy animals.

Just why does this farmer-owned cooperative believe so strongly in the goals of the NDAWI?

"Land O' Lakes has endorsed the concept of the NDAWI because industry-wide standards will help formalize what producers do every day to care for their cattle," says Lydia Botham, director of public affairs for Land O' Lakes.

The NDAWI spells out guidelines for all types of dairy animals. The guidelines cover newborn calves, weaned calves, growing heifers, adult cows, and bulls.

In addition, the guidelines look at various aspects of dairy animal management. These include nutrition, health, housing and facilities, and handling, movement and transportation. There's also a recommendation for third-party oversight, to make sure the guidelines are being followed.

Land O' Lakes is supporting the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative in two ways, according to Botham.

"Land O' Lakes supports NDAWI with funding. And we have staff members on its committees," she points out.

Land O' Lakes is an appropriate organization to help shape the initiative's principles and guidelines. The cooperative conducts business in all 50 U.S. states, along with more than 50 countries.

What's more, Land O' Lakes has a depth and

breadth of involvement in U.S. agriculture. It markets supplies, production and business services, and is involved in the animal nutrition business, with its feed products such as milk replacers for dairy calves.

Besides helping write the animal well-being guidelines, Land O' Lakes is spreading the word about the initiative. It's also helping its farmer-members put the guidelines into practice.

Botham says, "We have formed a working group of producer representatives from across the country, along with staff members, and are reviewing the draft principles and guidelines. Our elected leaders discussed the initiative at the Land O' Lakes annual meeting, and we have been raising awareness of NDAWI at a series of 45 membership meetings nationally. We've also been keeping producers informed in our publications and our member website."

Developers of the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative are asking for continued input from dairy producers, by way of their cooperatives or industry associations. Suggestions for ways to fine tune the guidelines, or broaden or clarify them, are wanted by June 30. From there, initiative developers will finalize the principles and guidelines.

The result, according to the NDAWI website, will be ways to achieve this goal: "Provide a uniform umbrella of assurance that the (dairy) industry is meeting its ethical obligation for dairy animal well-being" and "protect consumer trust and confidence in the dairy industry by demonstrating dairy producers' commitment to animal well-being."

By Ron Johnson

Questions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

in some way, include: Alto Dairy, American Association of Bovine Practitioners, American Farm Bureau Federation, Animart, American Foods Group, Cornell University, Dairy Farmers of America, Dairy Management Inc., Elanco Animal Health, Foremost Farms USA, Grande Cheese Company, International Dairy Foods Association, Land O' Lakes, Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center Inc., Morgan&Myers, National Milk Producers Federation, Northeast Dairy Producers Association, Organic Valley, Pfizer Animal Health, Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO), Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin, Rabobank, Rosenholm Wolfe Dairy LLP, Safeway Inc., Smithfield Beef Group, United Dairymen of Arizona, University of Arizona, University of California-Davis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Validus, Washington Dairy Products Commission, Washington State Dairy Federation, WestfaliaSurge, Inc., Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, Wisconsin Pork Producers Association.

Q: Why is this important?

A: Animal well-being is increasingly important to our customers and other dairy industry stakeholders who grant us the social license we need to operate. Today, dairy animal well-being is not a top of mind consumer concern. We want to maintain the level of consumer trust and confidence in dairy producers.

The Initiative gives you a chance to control your destiny and protect your freedom to operate by demonstrating that the dairy industry is committed to doing the right thing when it comes to animal well-being. It also provides you the opportunity to protect your markets and preserve market access by proving your commitment to animal well-being to customers and other stakeholders by participating in an animal well-being program that incorporates the national well-being principles and guidelines.

Q: How do I get involved?

A: There are two ways to get involved today. First, be supportive of the work being done by the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative. Consider signing the endorsement form that formally indicates your support. You can also help us promote the dairy industry's long standing commitment to animal care by talking about the issue to fellow producers, and others you know in the industry. Second, take part in an on-farm animal well-being program that incorporates the well-being principles and guidelines being developed by the Coalition. Your co-op, association or other market channel partner may already have a program in place. If not, encourage them to develop one or consider one that is available on the open market.

Q: Why should I participate?

A: We need all producers to demonstrate the dairy industry's commitment to animal well-being. Today, dairy animal well-being is not a top of mind issue for consumers. We want to provide our customers, policy makers and other stakeholders who grant us the social license to operate, the assurance that we are meeting our ethical obligation to care for our animals. If we work together we can protect our free-

dom to operate by successfully managing this issue.

Q: Isn't this just giving into the activists?

A: No. The creation of the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative demonstrates the dairy industry's awareness of the need to communicate our commitment to animal well-being to our customers and consumers. Dairy producers have a long tradition of providing good care for their animals. We want to control our own destiny by creating a program that proves our commitment and allows us to honestly and accurately portray what happens on the farm.

Q: Is this a government program? Are they going to audit my operation?

A: This is not a government program. The National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative was created by a group of concerned industry stakeholders who know producers are committed to doing what's right and want to help the industry successfully manage this challenging issue. There will not be government audits of your on-farm animal well-being practices. The National Dairy Animal Well-Being Principles and Guidelines do include third party oversight to assure credibility. Individual well-being programs may incorporate different methods of third party oversight that are consistent with the principles and guidelines.

Q: How is the Initiative funded?

A: To date much of the work of the Initiative has been done by volunteers. The people who have attended the Coalition meetings have all done so at their own cost. The Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin provided initial funding to get the Initiative off the ground. Other industry stakeholders are providing funding to help launch the Initiative publicly.

Q: What does this do to my co-op's or processor's existing animal well-being program?

A: We believe that having uniform national dairy animal well-being principles and guidelines will help validate the strength of individual on-farm animal well-being programs. Your co-op's or processor's program should be enhanced by the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative.

Q: What if my co-op doesn't participate in the Initiative?

A: If your co-op or milk marketer does not participate in a welfare program that is part of the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative, you may do so on your own. There are independent well-being programs offered by companies across the country. Your state or national dairy organization may be able to recommend one doing business in your area.

To endorse the program on your own, please refer to the page titled "Endorsers" on the National Dairy Animal Well-Being website at www.dairywellbeing.org. Endorsement forms may be obtained by accessing the links at the bottom of the page in the box "Support the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative!" Producers and industry organizations are encouraged to complete the endorsement form and return it using the instructions at the bottom of the form.

Educate

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

exactly what they're doing, the steps that they're taking, the quality and the care that they are putting into each and every animal," says Murphy.

Regardless of size, the dairy industry as an entirety should come together to educate consumers.

"If you could provide the valuable resource that's helping to educate what happens to food, you're going to win friends for life," says Murphy. "One thing dairy has to do, is that it has to be more approachable, more transparent and engaged with the public."

"The dairy industry is suffering from separation anxiety," he says.

In many cases, the dairy industry has moved away from towns geographically, causing consumers to be detached from agriculture emotionally.

"They don't get to see them and they're uncertain as what is going on," says Murphy.

Having more communication, gives the industry the opportunity to effectively show and demonstrate the true face of the industry. If negative situations arise, it also gives producers the chance to accurately explain the situation that occurs. Such situations, like the recent California slaughter plant incident are deterring to the entire industry and greatly affect anyone that is a part of it.

"When one part of the chain suffers, the entire chain suffers," says Murphy.

Producers should work to develop a crisis plan if they haven't already done so.

"The system is the brand – it's the entire system from the moment the product is conceived until it's consumed – that is the brand

and you have to safe guard it in every step," says Murphy.

While the industry is faced with many challenges as it continues to grow, it creates greater opportunity to educate consumers on the changes being made as this growth occurs.

"Right now it's a golden opportunity for dairy producers to grab this issue and show what they believe in and are committed to," says Murphy. "When people are looking more and more at your industry, it's a great time for you to show them the depth of your caring, the depth of the passion you have.

"Now it's time for others to start to see the commitment to quality that they have and that they employ every day on their farms," he adds.

As the industry grows, there is also a continual growth in the terminology used. The more communication the industry initiates, the more consumers will understand or at least recognize what the terminology used stands for.

"Anytime you communicate, you're going to do a better job of clarifying the myths that surround terminology," says Murphy. "People have a tendency to hear a term and immediately start to fill their head with what it means."

By becoming involved in the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative, it demonstrates ones commitment to the industry and assures confidence in the consumer that you have taken the time to make sure these quality standards have been met by your organization, your facility or your farm.

Once producers become involved in the initiative, it is vital to reinforce it.

"I would participate

and make sure that the program that you're in meets the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative," says Murphy. "I would also try to understand that no matter where you are or if you already have a welfare program in place, this is a program that allows there to be some kind of consistency across all of the different programs."

In addition to the initiative, there are also other ways in which producers can close the gap between consumers and producers.

"Get to know people up and down the chain regardless of what position they play and promote yourself, promote your farm, be involved in the community so that consumers can see that you care about what's going on in the community," says Murphy. "As long as we fill the communication vacuum right now, then other people can't fill it with misinformation."

Consumers continually want to know more about their food. By communicating, producers are demonstrating to them their passion and helping to reconnect a face with the farm.

"People love the dairy industry and they love their farms, they love and take care of their animals and its time for the rest of the world to see that," says Murphy. "We're not used to blowing our horn for that, but now is the time to do that, we have to do that."

"Now is the time because all eyes are looking toward the dairy industry, it's time to show forth our passion," he adds.

To learn more about the initiative and become involved, visit www.dairy-wellbeing.org.

By Kelsi Hendrickson

"I believe that the NDAWI brings many benefits to the dairy industry. Through this initiative, consumer confidence in the dairy food chain is increased. It is a standardized quality of care that shows that the dairy industry prioritizes and strives for the best possible well being of our cows. I believe that well being programs are inevitable and the NDAWI allows the dairy industry and dairy producers to be a proactive part of the process."

~Neil Rejman, dairy producer in New York

"As a retail grocery chain, Safeway is committed to sourcing our dairy products from producers who treat their animals in a humane fashion, provide for their health and well-being, and adhere to sound animal management practices.

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~Mary Kamm, Safeway

FAQs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

Q: Are veal calves included in this Initiative?

A: The principles and guidelines cover all animals on the dairy. Once a calf leaves the dairy, it would no longer be covered by the principles and guidelines. This is true regardless of where the calf is going.

Q: What will it cost for producers to participate?

A: There is no cost to producers for the development of the principles and guidelines. It is up to each producer and their co-op or marketing partner to determine the appropriate animal well-being program for their situation. The cost and allocation of cost is a decision made by the marketing partner and the producer. The National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative has no role in that relationship.

Q: What is the timeline to review the principles and guidelines document?

A: The principles and guidelines were released at the 2007 World Dairy Expo and are currently available for industry comment and feedback. Industry stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback through their producer organization or co-op from now through July 1, 2008, which is the end of the nine month review period. After July 1, the Principles and Guidelines Committee of the NDAWI will evaluate all comments received and propose a final principles and guidelines document for approval by the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Coalition. This process should be complete in time for World Dairy Expo in 2008.

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Above & Beyond

Sharing the NDAWI Message With Producers and Customers

Joan Behr and Frances Lechner have gone above and beyond their communications positions at dairy cooperatives to lend their expertise to the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative (NDAWI).

The Initiative was introduced to the dairy industry last fall at World Dairy Expo. Prior to that point a number of concerned individuals from across the country came together to form the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Coalition, which consists of four subcommittees – Principles and Guidelines, Producer Outreach, Industry Outreach and Fundraising.

As co-chairs of the producer outreach committee for the Initiative, Behr and Lechner are charged with carrying out the communication strategies, whether it is communicating with dairy producers, other cooperatives or milk marketing organizations, or dairy industry customers. Their committee is made up of both producers and industry representatives.

“Our goal has been to get cooperatives to endorse the whole concept of the initiative,” Lechner says. They have also been encouraging producers to review the draft copy of the Principles and Guidelines (found on page XXX) so that the Coalition can receive some feedback before July 1. The Coalition will incorporate industry feedback into the final principles and guidelines to be released in the fall.

The committee is focused on raising awareness and education about the Initiative and why it is important for the long-term best interests of the industry.

With animal well-being at the forefront as of late from the release of the Hallmark Meat Packing Co. slaughterhouse video, this is an issue

that needs to be addressed.

“Consumers want to know where their food comes from and how it is raised,” Behr says. In addition, “suppliers are asking questions.”

Behr, corporate communications specialist for Foremost Farms USA, based out of Baraboo, Wis., is volunteering her time to “serve the industry’s best interests and provide long-term market protection and market access.”

“We saw it as an opportunity for Foremost Farms to be involved upfront in the whole process,” she says. “We’d rather be involved all along than to find out what happened when it’s all done.”

She serves on the Coalition representing both the cooperative as a milk marketing entity and the dairy producer members of Foremost Farms USA. Another Foremost Farms member and dairy producer, John Rosenow is also working with the Coalition on the Principles and Guidelines committee.

Behr’s responsibilities with Foremost Farms include keeping members, employees and stakeholders informed of happenings at the cooperative. This ties well with her position on this major industry initiative.

As she looks to communicate with her members, as well as the cooperative’s customers, it’s a “value knowing we are a part of this process,” Behr says. “It helps me add value to the communications I do with our members.”

Using the cooperative’s newsletter and delegate meetings, Behr was able to

share what has been taking place with their members and generate discussion about the Initiative and proposed Principles and Guidelines.

Still in the Initiative’s beginning stages, she says there are some unknown answers to questions being asked. Issues regarding the certification of programs and third-party audits have not yet been finalized.

Even though those in the industry are “still trying to get their arms around how it fits” in the whole picture, Behr says she believes this Initiative will be the “foundation for future programs.”

Foremost, as well as many other cooperatives and milk marketers, have had customers coming to them looking for assurance that their farmers are following good animal well-being practices.

“We ultimately need to look at developing our own (animal well-being) program,” she says of the cooperative that is made up of 2,700 farms in seven Midwest states.

Many dairy product customers – companies that buy cheese or other products to further process or use, or retailers that sell directly to consumers – have told the Coalition that they’d rather see the dairy industry agree on guidelines than for someone not familiar with animals set the rules.

“I want to see the dairy industry succeed,” Behr says of what’s driving her to continue her efforts. “We produce a great product, one of the most nutritious products there is.”

Therefore she is finding ways to help producers protect and grow their market.

Behr grew up on a dairy and hog farm near Waukon, Iowa, and has been a spokesperson for the dairy industry for most of her life. She began

as an alternate state dairy princess and traveled the state of Iowa sharing the benefits of dairy products and promoting, what was then, a voluntary checkoff program. Her career path took her to Midwest Dairy Association where she worked for five years helping retailers promote dairy and the Iowa Dairy Princess program. She began working at Wisconsin Dairies Cooperative in 1985 and continued with the company through its merger into Foremost Farms USA 10 years later.

In addition to her work with NADWI, Behr serves on the sponsor’s board for the Wisconsin FFA Foundation and the Madison Area Technical College (MATC) Business Advisory Committee. She’s also been a committee member on various National Milk Producers Federation and Wisconsin Federation of Cooperative committees.

In another part of the country, Frances Lechner is busy promoting the NDAWI to the members of her cooperative, the United Dairymen of Arizona (UDA) and other milk marketing groups. To do this, Lechner has utilized the relationships she’s built with the members of her cooperative and communication staff in other milk marketing companies and cooperatives.

Lechner is no stranger to animal well-being issues and this new wave of consumers coming forward with questions about industry practices. As a member of the steering committee for the Campaign for Farmers & Ranchers in Arizona, she worked very hard to defeat a statewide initiative which criminalized the use of sow gestation stalls and veal



Joan Behr



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Sharing

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22
crates.

"The dairy industry saw this as an invasion of all animal agriculture by folks with a vegetarian agenda," she recalls. "We realized agriculture needed to stand together on this even though it did not directly impact dairy at the time."

While working with the campaign, Lechner grew to know Charlie Arnot, who has helped formulate the NDAWI. She views her work on the producer outreach committee now as an "outgrowth" of her work with the previous campaign.

Unfortunately Arizona agriculture lost the sow stall and veal crate issue, yet Lechner is determined not to let something like that happen to the dairy industry.

As the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) continues to work its way across the country working on its animal rights agenda, she says, "It's time to draw a line in the sand." So she and many others in the dairy industry are busy putting together a framework for what intends to be a way to satisfy consumer questions about how dairy animals are cared for and kept.

As a middle class citizen with a college education and no ag background, Lechner says she is an asset to this line of work because her circle of friends is similar to the target animal well-being audience. They are after "attentive, caring people" that "aren't educated about modern agriculture."

Today's society is also searching for the next issue to absorb. "We live off soundbites and don't want to work through complicated issues," she says. "One challenge for agriculture is to be realistic about what the general public is willing and able to become educated about. We need to impact decision and policy makers."

Groups like HSUS have the dollars and hours to spend on campaigns, whereas people in agriculture are simply overwhelmed with what they need to do to survive.

Lechner has learned this agriculture lifestyle after working at UDA for almost 24 years.

She grew up in Kalamazoo, Mich., and spent some time student teaching in London, England.

Upon her return, she knew she wanted to see more of America and decided to check out what Arizona had to offer. That's where she's been for the past 33 years. She started out with teaching and then worked on member-outreach for a natural foods cooperative. There, she fell in love with the cooperative philosophy and structure and soon began working part-time for UDA where "no two days were ever alike. It was a whole new world," she remembers.

She started in the laboratory at UDA where she was, among other things, the "bearer of bad news" having to call producers when the results of their milk sample tests demanded corrective action on the dairy. Over time, she progressed to training and developing staff, and then to the communications field.

What keeps Lechner moving forward is the "respect, appreciation and real fondness" for the dairy producers she works with.

"I have a personal obligation to do the best that I can for them," she says. "I am committed to whatever it takes to protect producers."

Although UDA is a small



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SEE LECHNER, ON PAGE 26



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Don't Reinvent the Wheel, Roll With the Egg

The poultry industry has faced multiple animal well-being issues as of late, and the dairy industry needs to take note – they could be the next target.

Poultry, more specifically the egg industry, has created a producer education program and acceptable production practices certification program to help maintain animal well-being and consumer confidence.

Times have changed. Consumers are becoming more aware and educated through media channels that are generally not farmer-friendly, and money is being donated to groups who have declared their goal as making all consumers vegans.

These groups' animal welfare concerns are not generally based on science, but on emotion and perception - making it a hard case to argue.

Producers and the agriculture industry as a whole make decisions based on science, but with pressure from the marketplace, animal rights groups and ballot ini-

tiatives, it's becoming more difficult.

The group leading the way in the current movement is the well-known and well-funded Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).

HSUS is able to spend millions to collect signatures and campaign for ballot initiatives and create media campaigns targeted at the emotions of consumers, while producer organizations, like the United Egg Producers (UEP), just cannot compete funding wise.

Being proactive has helped the egg industry create a better product for consumers and allowed them to apprehend credible scientific information with producer backing to defend themselves - should problems arise.

Chad Gregory, vice president of UEP reports the organization had been the "first and most" targeted ag sector by the activist groups. He says the egg industry is small, making it an easier target compared to the larger

SEE EGG, ON PAGE 27

Lechner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

cooperative with 69 members that have 88 operations, UDA ranks 13th in the country for milk volume. Large herds (averaging 1,200 head) and high producing cows account for the co-op's high ranking. All the members, but one Californian producer, hail from Arizona.

As member relations manager at UDA, Lechner provides staff support for the board of directors, board committees and task forces, and for the young cooperators. She writes for the cooperative's magazine and plays a lobbyist/activist role. "I provide the link and liaison between larger issues and

our membership," she says.

UDA has formed a task force to address the issue of animal well-being. Meanwhile, Lechner has been communicating the Initiative's progress with fellow staff members and starting to get the word out among producers, hoping they in turn share with each other.

Outside of work, Lechner is involved as an alumnus of Project Centrl, a rural/agricultural leadership development program and getting to know the small rural community outside of Phoenix where she and her husband recently moved.

By Karen Lee

Egg

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

pork or dairy industries.

"There are only 200 egg producers or egg companies in the United States," he says. "The activists really attacked our industry."

To combat the attacks the UEP commissioned an independent scientific committee chaired by Dr. Jeff Armstrong, now the dean of agriculture at Michigan State University.

"Independent is the key word here," he says.

Armstrong selected his own committee to conduct an analysis of the egg industry. The group spent about two years reviewing current production practices and science available around the world on beak trimming, molting, transportation and housing.

The committee brought its analysis and findings to the UEP board. The board approved the recommenda-

tions - agreeing with the science used in the analysis.

From those recommendations, the UEP Certified Program was established during 2001 and 2002.

The program requires that 100 percent of a producer's or company's farms - both owned and marketed - comply with the certification.

The UEP program requires monthly compliance reports. All activities for that month have to be recorded and submitted to UEP. Producers must also complete a yearly pass/fail audit conducted by the USDA or Validus.

"We wanted to have a non-government agency as well," he says. "Eighty percent of producers still get it done by the USDA."

Gregory thinks the pass/fail audit is the way to go.

"The big key was, if you fail your audit on the housing portion of the audit alone,

you failed the entire audit - no question asked," he says.

The audit is based on 200 points and to pass producers have to get 170 out of 200. If the producer fails - they have 60 days to fix the problem and complete a re-audit.

"If you don't pass the re-audit, you're off the program," he explains.

Once failed, the industry and marketplace are notified the producer is "no longer selling science-based certified eggs anymore".

Gregory says 85 percent of the industry is audited. "Almost all shell eggs that you buy in the grocery store are on the program," he says.

The UEP program has been endorsed by Food Marketing Institute, National Council of Chain Restaurants, McDonald's, Burger King and the International Egg

"On our farm, the standards will involve some more recordkeeping but little, if any changes, in how we work with our dairy animals. I think this will be true for most all farms as we now employ the best practices available for not only economic reasons but for an inbred desire to treat our animals with respect. We want to have a standard that realistically addresses the real desire of the public to see that dairy animals are treated well. We feel the NDAWI accomplishes that."

-John Rosenow, dairy producer in Cochrane, Wis.

SEE UEP, ON PAGE 30

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UEP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

Commission. The acceptance by these groups quickly opened the path to other market outlets including retail giant Wal-Mart. Even with the UEP Certified Programs, the industry still faces opposition, but the program helps the industry keep control.

Last year, HSUS introduced anti-cage legislation in seven states. Some producers felt UEP had put a target on their back by creating the certification program, but Gregory disagrees.

The program has proved valuable in government body hearings because there is science behind the program. It also gives consumers a choice to whatever egg they want to buy that fits into their budget.

UEP also argues the economic impact on the state if the cages were removed. Gregory says it would take

three times more space for chickens to live in a cage-free environment. For the 290 million chickens in the United States an area the size of Rhode Island would be needed. The price of eggs would skyrocket and eggs would be imported – probably not from certified farms either.

To keep its members informed, UEP has newsletters, e-mails and many meetings.

"It's the classic David versus Goliath here," he says about fighting HSUS. But the battle is easier with the certification program.

"If we hadn't done what we did seven or eight years ago - there'd be a minimum of seven states right now that would have anti-cage legislation," he says. "We would not have had a story or a defense."

Producers now can share with consumers and media

that their eggs are produced through a humane certification program based on science and audited by USDA.

WORDS OF WISDOM

The dairy industry should learn from the past - what did and didn't work - when looking to the future.

First and foremost, Gregory says the recommendations have to be created by an independent committee.

"It's got to be credible," he says. "It's got to have teeth."

Any program must have a pass or fail audit, he adds.

Gregory encourages dairy producers and the industry to continue to tell their story and continue to be proactive.

"I appreciate the dairy industry for trying to get ahead of it," he says. "I applaud their effort."

By Sarah Watson

"Americans continue to recognize milk as nature's most nearly perfect food. They've always been able to depend on milk and dairy products as safe and wholesome. Today's consumers simply want assurance that our industry is committed to making animal well-being a priority in the production process. That's not too much to ask. The NDAWI helps to clarify the issues and organize our attention and efforts toward the common goal of providing appropriate care for our animals and reassuring our consumers accordingly."

~Jan Shearer, D.V.M., MS,
University of Florida

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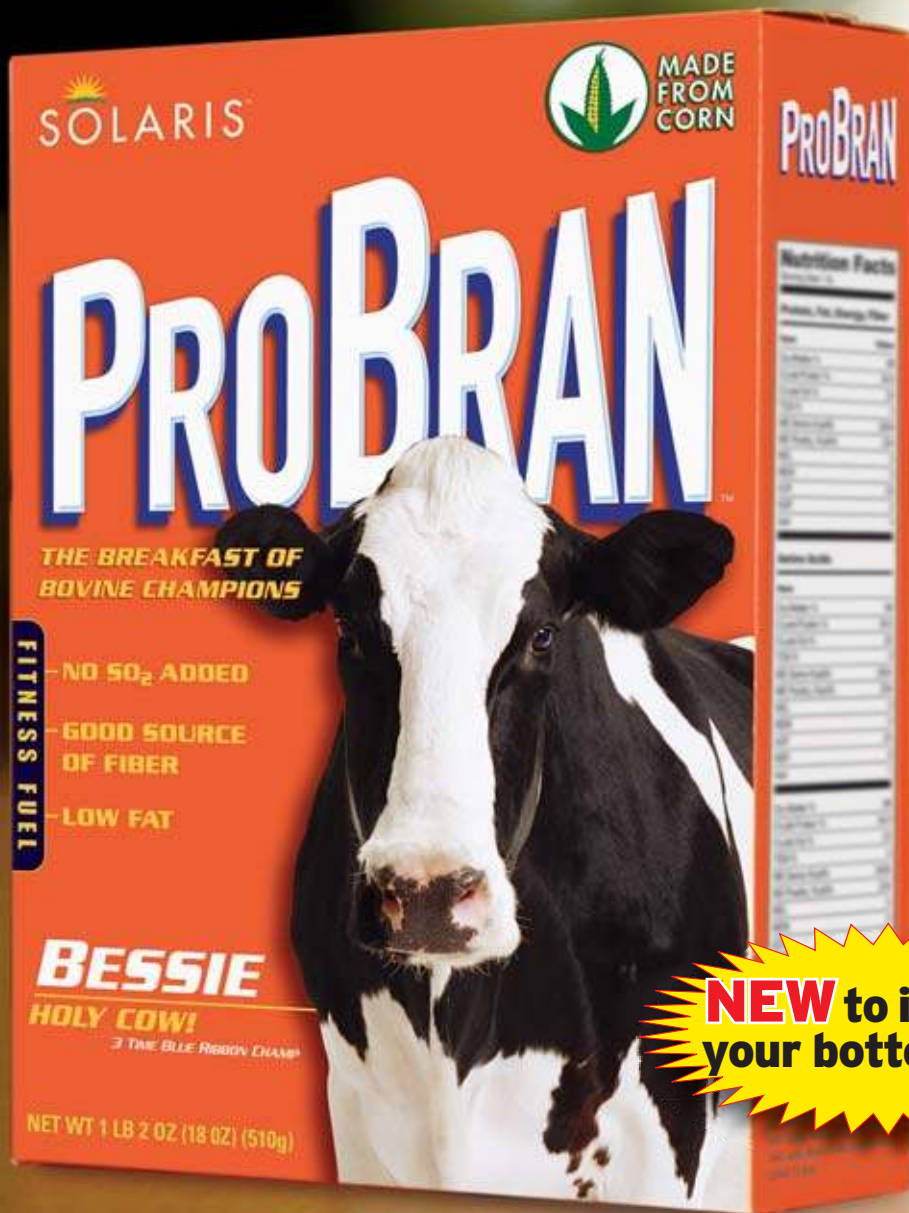
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