

PDPW MANAGERS memo

May 30, 2008 – Special Edition

Providing Tools You Can Use – This Managers Memo contains helpful information you can use to answer tough questions and to promote your dairy business.

At a summer picnic, graduation party or wedding reception, a neighboring dairy producer may sit down next to you to “talk farming.” You know how to talk this talk. It’s what you do every day.

But, have you been asked a tough question from a non-farm consumer? Do you know how to answer their tough questions? What words you should use? How do you explain something that’s very familiar to you without using industry lingo?

This special edition of the PDPW Manager Memo will provide you with consumer-friendly answers to commonly asked tough questions. Last year, PDPW launched Dairy Connect, a one-day communications and issues training course that helps dairy producers and other industry professionals “connect” with and effectively communicate with non-farm community members. At each training, participants shared one tough question, commonly referred to as a “nightmare question,” and we used these tough questions to develop this special Managers Memo.

Use this helpful resource when talking with other consumers at June Dairy Month events, in line at the supermarket, at the local fair, while in the stands during a softball game or when you’re on the phone with your cousin who lives in the city. Also, you should look for other opportunities to be an ambassador for dairy and speak from your heart when you share your pride in the dairy industry!

Q: What do you think of the Hallmark/Westland incident?

A: I was appalled by the way the cows were treated in that plant. As a dairy producer, I recognize my ethical obligation to care for the animals on my farm. One our dairy, we take care of our herd by providing a nutritious diet and healthy living conditions. Animal care facilities and practices that provide for the safety, comfort and hygiene of the herd are an important part of keeping the cows healthy.

Q: What can you tell me about the rbST hormone and milk?

A: All milk, including human breast milk, contains hormones that are digested just as other proteins are digested. Milk from rbST-supplemented cows is safe for human consumption and is no different than milk from cows not supplemented with rbST. This has been affirmed and reaffirmed since the use of rbST was approved in the early 1990s. Milk is milk, and it is a safe, nutritious food.

Q: Why are California cows so happy?

A: No matter where a cow lives, dairy producers ensure their animals are happy and healthy. On our dairy, we go to great lengths to make sure that healthy living conditions, nutritious feed, preventive healthcare programs and sanitary milking procedures are in place for our cows. Our dairy is dedicated to making sure our animals are healthy, comfortable and content.

Q: How do I know that the milk I'm feeding my family doesn't have antibiotics in it?

A: Your milk never contains antibiotics. All milk shipped off farms is tested daily for safety and quality, including antibiotic residue. Dairy producers are very careful about administering antibiotics, so it's rare that antibiotics reach the milk. The U.S. dairy industry conducts more than 3.5 million tests each year to ensure that antibiotics are kept out of the milk supply. In the extremely rare instance when the milk tests positive for antibiotics, the entire truckload of milk is thrown away. If it's not perfect, it's pitched.

Q: Is dairy an important part of a healthy diet? I've heard it's not good for you.

A: Studies show that nothing beats dairy's benefits to good health. Milk and dairy foods offer a powerful package of calcium and eight other essential nutrients for pennies an ounce. A serving of milk provides calcium, protein, vitamins A, D and B12, riboflavin, potassium and niacin. Plus you can choose your favorite milk to get all the nutritional benefits. Skim, 1%, 2%, chocolate and whole milk all contain the same amount of nutrients per serving.

Q: What is pasteurization?

A: Pasteurization is the most important food safety tool in use in the world today and has been in use and refined for more than 100 years. By law, pasteurized milk must be heated to 161 degrees for 15 seconds. The heating process kills bacteria that may be present in the raw milk, ensuring the milk is safe for human consumption.

Q: Is organic milk better than regular milk?

A: No, all milk is equally nutritious. Milk is milk! All milk must comply with very stringent safety standards. According to USDA and the American Dietetic Association (ADA) organically produced food isn't safer or more nutritious than conventionally produced food.

Q: Do dairy farmers care about the environment?

A: Yes. Our land is our home and it is important to all dairy producers to protect our land for our families and for future generations. My family drinks water from the wells on our land, breaths the same air as the rest of the community, enjoys the natural environment and eats what we produce. Protecting that environment is very important to us.

Do you have another tough question that you're not sure how to answer? If so, email your question to mail@pdpw.org and we'll include the answer in an upcoming Managers Memo.

Are you interested in taking your communications skills to a new level? Mark your calendar now for the next Dairy Connect training on Tuesday, September 16 in Madison. Call 800.947.7379 for more information.

PDPW Educational Calendar:

Mark your calendar now!

September 16 – Dairy Connect Training, Madison, WI

November 8-9 – Youth Leadership Derby, Brillion High School in Brillion, WI

March 17-18, 2009 – PDPW Annual Business Conference, Madison, WI

PROFESSIONAL DAIRY PRODUCERS OF WISCONSIN

N5776 US Hwy 151, Suite 1

Fond du Lac, WI 54937

Phone: 800-947-7379

Fax: 920-273-0369

www.pdpw.org
