

PDPW MANAGERS *memo*

Special Edition, September 28, 2007

One definition of leadership is the ability to make important decisions with less than perfect or complete information. That is never an easy thing to do, but when PDPW takes the lead, good things happen for the dairy industry.

In December of 2005, our 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 the ethical treatment of our animals.

We had less than perfect information at the start. We did not know what the solution would be, or if we could or should work with dairy industry partners across the country to define the issue and control our destiny. But in true PDPW style, our leaders were willing to step out in faith, knowing that their efforts were in the best interest of the entire dairy industry. It was a tremendous demonstration of true leadership.

At World Dairy Expo next week the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative will be publicly launched. PDPW was the catalyst for this effort. We have been joined by strong industry partners who have helped us build the fire that will light our path to success, but you can't have a fire without a spark and that spark was PDPW.

In this Managers Memo Special Edition, you will learn more about what the Initiative is and how it will work. We're proud of the work that has been done. More will need to be done over the coming year, and we're confident that producers and other leaders will make the right decisions and help protect our freedom to operate by embracing the work of the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative. Most of all, we're proud of the leaders in PDPW and we're proud to be part of this organization. When PDPW takes the lead, good things do happen for the dairy industry.

Sincerely,
Shelly Mayer, PDPW Executive Director and the PDPW Board of Directors

National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative (NDAWI)

Agriculture continues to change. 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 and quality. Those same changes make many of our dairies less familiar to the general public. As a result, today's consumers are far removed from production agriculture, and have less understanding of what is taking place on the farm. Because consumers today are less familiar with animal agriculture, it is easier for special interest groups to create doubt about animal care and other production practices. Animal agriculture no longer enjoys the same level of public trust our predecessors took for granted.

Producers today must demonstrate their commitment to ethical production as well as scientifically verified principles in the quality of milk they produce, as well as the care of animals, employees and the environment. In the past, when consumers have questioned dairy producers about their practices, the industry has responded almost exclusively with science-based answers. At times, those responses were viewed by the public as non-responsive because they didn't communicate the commitment to ethical principles and shared values. Today, agriculture must demonstrate our commitment to ethics as well as science to build the trust we need with the critical stakeholders who grant the social license dairy needs to operate.

The dairy industry is aware of the growing disconnect between consumers and producers. A broad based group of dairy interests from across the country including producers, processors and branded food companies have been working for two years to create a system that demonstrates the dairy industry's commitment to ethical production based on science-based practices. That group, the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Coalition will publicly unveil the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative at World Dairy Expo.

The National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative is an 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.

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

Following the announcement at World Dairy Expo, they will provide an opportunity for industry stakeholders, including co-ops and producer groups, to review and provide feedback on the principles and guidelines. 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. We urge you to learn more about the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative at www.dairywellbeing.org.

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 freedom to operate by successfully managing this issue.

National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative Frequently Asked Question's

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

A: The National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative is a producer lead 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 obligation to provide appropriate care for our animals by having a uniform national umbrella of well-being principles and guidelines.

Once the principles and guidelines committee finishes their work, we will provide an opportunity for industry stakeholders, including co-ops and producer groups, to review 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. The details of that review are still being developed.

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 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 US dairy industry.

Industry leaders participating in the Coalition, or contributing in some way, include: Alto Dairy, American Association of Bovine Practitioners, Animart, American Foods Group, Cornell University, Dairy Farmers of America, Dairy producers, Elanco, Foremost Farms USA, Grande Cheese Company, International Dairy Foods Association, Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center, Morgan & Meyers, National Milk Producers Federation, Northeast Dairy Producers Association, Organic Valley, Pfizer, Professional Animal Auditor Certification Organization (PAACO), Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin, Rabobank, Safeway, Smithfield Beef Group, United Dairymen of Arizona, University of California – Davis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Validus, Washington Dairy Products Commission, Washington State Dairy Federation, Westfalia Surge, 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 freedom 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: What does this cost, and 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's the timeframe of the public launch?

A: The kick-off of the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative will take place at the 2007 World Dairy Expo.

Q: What does this do to my co-ops' or processors' 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-ops' or processors' program should be enhanced by the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative.

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: How can I get more information?

A: You may learn more about the National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative, and download the draft principles and guidelines document, by visiting www.dairywellbeing.org.

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

A: Following the launch at World Dairy Expo, the principles and guidelines will be available for industry comment during a nine month period during which industry stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback through their producer organization or co-op. At the end of the nine-month review period, 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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