



Connect Inspire Achieve

March 2019 Enhance Webinar: The National Dairy FARM Program, presented by Emily Yeiser Stepp

On Friday March 15th, the DGN hosted a webinar that was presented by Emily Yeiser Stepp on the FARM Program. Established in 2009, the bones of the FARM, or Farmers Assuring Responsible Management, Program lay in it being the dairy industry's social responsibility program. The four silos of the program are: Animal Care, Antibiotic Stewardship, Environmental Stewardship and Workforce Development, with animal care being the longest standing.

The Animal Care silo encompasses a framework and foundation for animal care, allows for a snapshot of farm management practices and strives to be facility and size neutral to allow one unified program (FARM) to be able to meet the diversity of the industry yet remain science and outcome based. The Animal Care standards are updated every three years by a technical writing group that consists of farmers, academics, veterinarians and cooperative/processor staff. Proudly, the FARM program boasts being the first animal welfare program to be ISO certified.

Version 4 of this program is to be finalized so that evaluations of this version can start January of 2020. Improvements will include a participant handbook, QA oversight, willful mistreatment protocol clarity, updates to trainer/evaluator requirements and expectations as well as oversight and feedback ability. Proposed standards, both changes to the existing and new standards altogether, will be an extensive list that includes requiring immediate action on tail docking and corrective actions such as VCPR, calf disbudding prior to eight weeks of age and euthanasia and non-ambulatory protocols within nine months. Furthermore, a continuous improvement plan is to be implemented within three years that will include calf care protocols, written drug treatment records and animal observations. New to the lineup will be information on continuous improvement plans for family labor.

As for the antibiotic stewardship component, there are resources available that include a manual and pocket guide entitled *Milk and Dairy Beef Drug Residue Prevention*. Moreover, there are templates for treatment plans and drug lists. The environmental stewardship pillar is a voluntary option for any FARM participant that serves as a demonstration of the industry's continued environmental achievements as well as being a resource to address requests for GHG data via a model to generate a dairy's carbon and energy footprint. There have been more than 750 evaluations to date with 20 participating cooperatives and processors. Lastly, the workforce development section has a variety of fact sheets including within the legal arena and an HR resource on managing employee housing. Up and coming resources will include a more exhaustive library of HR and safety manuals with accompanying video training.

Emily ended her presentation by encouraging attendees to visit the website (<https://nationaldairyfarm.com/animal-care-open-comments/>) and to submit public comments for Version 4 of the animal care. The general email to get ahold of the FARM group is dairyfarm@nmpf.org.

Written by DGN Press Corps Member Megan Kelly

Edited by DGN Interactive Media Lead, Amanda Borkowski

Vision Sponsors



Sustaining Sponsors

