

## Animal Welfare—Opportunity or Nightmare

Even though animal agriculture has traditionally managed and cared for animals using “good” husbandry practices, this has not been apparent or appreciated by consumers. Most producers view this as an ethical responsibility and do their best to comply. The challenge is establishing procedures and guidelines that can be used to verify this to processors, the food industry and consumers.

### What’s in the News...

1. Proposition 2—A ballot initiative in California for November 2008.

Prohibit confinement of some farm animals in a way that does not let them turn around freely, lie down, stand up and fully extend their limbs without touching the side of an enclosure or other animals. Applies to veal calves, swine, poultry. Dairy cattle are not currently listed. We should, however, expect dairy cattle to be included in future legislation. PASSED on November 4, 2008—63% for and 37% against

2. Colorado law passed in 2008 requires phasing out of veal calf housing in crates within 4 years and elimination of sow gestation crates within 10 years.
3. USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service proposed a new rule in August requiring all non-ambulatory disabled cattle to be condemned and properly disposed of.
4. Safeway Food Stores will increase the quantity of pork purchased from suppliers that are moving away from sow gestation crates.
5. HR1726 —a bill introduced in Congress that would require the federal government to purchase meat, dairy and egg products from producers who meet animal welfare standards similar to California Proposition 2.

<http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h110-1726>

### What do Consumers Say...

The Ohio State University 2004 survey (3,500 Ohio households)

1. 81% reported that the well-being of farm animals is just as important as the well-being of pets.
2. 57% disagree or strongly disagree that humans should be able to use animals for any purpose as long as the animals do not suffer pain.
3. 47% agree that increased regulations are needed for treatment of animals in farming.

This study confirms that consumers do care about the way we manage animals on dairy and livestock farms.



June/July 2005

#### (R)Evolution From Within? New Directions for the Humane Society

The Satya Interview with Wayne Pacelle

“With his promotion came a revamp of the organization’s mission, the development of a new campaigns section with a focus on farm animals, and the establishment of a company-wide vegan policy.”

### What’s in the Media...

The Oprah Winfrey Show, watched daily by millions of women (i.e. main grocery store consumers) devoted an entire episode to California Proposition 2. Aired on October 14th, 2008, the show was entitled Conscious Choices and was a comparison of commercial poultry, veal and swine farms with their organic counterparts. Wayne Pacelle, president of the Humane Society of the United States, condemned factory farming. Although both sides of the issues were presented, hogs in farrowing crates, calves in veal crates and laying hens in cages present a negative image.

Animal Agriculture must become proactive towards welfare issues. We must not only manage our cows well, we must inform consumers, the food industries (meat and milk), and the media that we are employing best management practices that address welfare issues. If we do not regulate ourselves, other groups will develop their own guidelines, matching their own agendas, and perform on-farm audits.

### Key Dairy Industry Issues...

1. Separation of calves from dams at, or shortly after, birth.
2. Neglect of bull calves compared with practices used for heifer calves.
3. Tail docking.
4. Dehorning calves without pain management.
5. Lameness cows.
6. Handling and treatment of downer animals.
7. Euthanasia procedures on the farm.
8. Individual hutches for calves rather than group (herd-like) housing.
9. The excessive number of injections routinely administered to an individual dairy cow.
10. Veal calves kept in crates.
11. High milk production that increases stress and decreases health and longevity of dairy cows.

#### Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

pro-vegetarian and animal rights group

“Less than 5 percent of PCRM’s members are physicians,” Newsweek wrote in February 2004. The respected news magazine continued:

[PCRM president Neal] Barnard has co-signed letters, on PCRM letterhead, with the leader of Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, an animal-rights group the Department of Justice calls a “domestic terrorist threat.” PCRM also has ties to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. An agency called the Foundation to Support Animal Protection has distributed money from PETA to PCRM in the past and, until very recently, did both groups’ books. Barnard and PETA head Ingrid Newkirk are both on the foundation’s board.

### What is the Industry Doing...

1. The Milk and Dairy Beef Quality Assurance Center ([www.dqacenter.org](http://www.dqacenter.org)) has developed a set of animal care guidelines for dairy cattle. These guidelines have been approved by the FMI NCCR—Food Marketing Institute and the National Council of Chain Restaurants.

2. NDWAI (National Dairy Animal Well-Being Initiative) is a coalition of dairy producers, processors, co-ops, retailers, ag-lenders, researchers and veterinarians. NEDPA (North East Dairy Producers) and Cornell University have also become involved. A set of guidelines that should be included in dairy welfare programs was released this year at the World Dairy Expo in Madison Wisconsin. ([www.dairywellbeing.org](http://www.dairywellbeing.org))

3. NYSCHAP (New York State Cattle Health Assurance Program) has developed an excellent cattle welfare module. If your dairy is already a NYSCHAP herd, you are encouraged to consider this module. If your dairy is not a NYSCHAP herd, this is a great time to join. (<http://nyschap.vet.cornell.edu/>)

### The Future...

The food industry, processors and consumers expect that animal industries develop on-farm audit programs addressing animal welfare. The expectation is that 3rd party audits will be a component of this process.

1. Self Assessment- conducted by farm personnel using guidelines and checklists.  
eg: 5-star Dairy Quality Assurance Program.
2. Second Party Assessments— conducted by farm personnel and farm advisors  
eg: NYSCHAP with herd veterinarian.
3. Third Party Audit— conducted by a trained or certified auditor with no previous connection to the farm.  
May include facility based audit—stall size, bunk space, etc.  
And/or animal based audit—Body Condition Score, Lameness Score, Hygiene Score, etc.



“The NYSCHAP program has some official USDA 840 RFID tags distribution to NYSCHAP farms enrolled in the Johne’s module. They are button ear tags only, no bangle ear tag to match. They can be used as official ID for interstate movement as well as for the country of origin labeling (no affidavit required when shipping). They are full duplex tags and there may be state assistance available to assist in tagging cows.”  
Kathy Finnerty, NYSCHAP

For more information, contact Dr. Michael Capel of the Perry Veterinary Clinic at 585.237.5550



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## Wyoming County Dairy Institute

### Registration Now Open For:



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**Precision Feeding ~ Tools for Feed Management**  
**Meeting the Nutritional Needs of Dairy Cows**

**Classes Run Tuesday, 12/2/08 through Tuesday, 12/16/08**  
**Classes will be held on Tuesday & Thursdays 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.**  
**Morning Session is Classroom / Afternoon Session is at Farm Site**  
**Classroom Sessions To Be Held at Cornell Cooperative Extension Office-Warsaw**  
**Cost is \$100 to Extension Members and \$120 for Non-Extension Individuals**  
**Register On Line or Call 585-786-2251 to Reserve Your Spot**

## [www.WyomingCountyDairyInstitute.com](http://www.WyomingCountyDairyInstitute.com)



## Happy Holidays!

## From the Partners and Staff of the Perry Veterinary Clinic

