



Sample Animal Care Policy

This sample animal care policy was drafted by staff at the National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) for implementation of the Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) Program. This draft policy has not been formally approved by NMPF. It is being provided solely to further the understanding and discussion among stakeholders concerning implementation of the FARM Program and to provide recommended industry best practices related to animal care policy. The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy is not requiring or mandating that its members implement or otherwise adopt this or any other animal care policy. To that end, consideration, adoption and/or implementation of this or any other animal care policy is and should remain an individual company decision based on each company's marketing and/or business considerations.

The following is a sample statement that could be used as the starting point for your company to create its own animal care policy. These are suggestions for you to include or model to fit your company's needs and objectives.

Sample Statement

Ensuring that we receive ample supply of the highest quality milk is [Company Name]'s lifeblood for making superior quality dairy products, and healthy cows produce safe, wholesome milk. We, along with dairy farmers, recognize that it's a collaborative industry responsibility to ensure the best care is provided to dairy cows, not only because it's good for business but because it's the right thing to do. [Company Name] is firmly committed to ethical treatment and sustained animal wellness on dairy farms. The well-being of animals raised and used in the food supply is important to us, as it is to the consumers of our products.

[Company Name] requires that all dairy farms and manufacturers that supply our company with milk or dairy products do so in a manner that meets or exceeds industry standards and government regulations regarding animal welfare. Willful mistreatment or cruelty to animals is unacceptable and inconsistent with the values of dairy farmers.

[Company Name] makes the following commitments with regard to animal care:

Guiding Principles

We require [Company Name] suppliers to comply with all applicable local and state laws and regulations on farm animal care. We recognize the "Five Freedoms," endorsed by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE),^a as being a valid baseline for quality animal care and husbandry:

- 1. Freedom from hunger or thirst** by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour
- 2. Freedom from discomfort** by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area
- 3. Freedom from pain, injury or disease** by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment
- 4. Freedom to express (most) normal behaviour** by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind
- 5. Freedom from fear and distress** by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering

^a World Animal Health Organisation. Terrestrial Animal Code. Article 7.1.2.2 http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmfile=chapitre_aw_introduction.htm



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Standards/Compliance

[Company Name] enthusiastically supports the animal care guidelines outlined in the National Dairy FARM (Farmers Assuring Responsible Management) Program and requires [Company Name]'s suppliers to enroll and participate in FARM. The FARM Program is founded on the principles of continuous improvement and details specific animal care guidelines and best practices that are available at www.nationaldairyfarm.com. Our suppliers will encourage this continuous improvement with their producers, make every effort to report progress on FARM program implementation and be as transparent as possible.

Expectations

A. Training

[Company Name] will continue to work with its dairy suppliers to ensure that providing proper animal care^b continues to be an on-going responsibility on dairy farms. In accordance with the FARM Program guidelines, [Company Name] expects all of its suppliers of dairy products to show evidence that annual employee training on animal care and handling is in place and that an Employee Code of Conduct^c is signed by each dairy farm employee.

B. Mistreatment of Animals

[Company Name] has no tolerance for the willful mistreatment of animals. In the event of a credible allegation of animal cruelty, our supplier will use the "FARM Program Protocol Following Allegations of Willful Mistreatment of Animals"^d to investigate the allegation. Upon confirmation of willful mistreatment, the offending farm will be placed on probation. As required by the FARM Program, during the probationary period an investigation will be conducted and a corrective action plan developed, completed and verified by a third party. Once this process has been completed, the farm will be removed from probation.

C. Dairy Cattle Care and Medical Procedures

Healthy, comfortable cows that are well fed and cared for are essential to the farmer and consistent with consumer expectations. To that end, [Company Name] supports the following practices, consistent with the FARM Program:

Housing: Cows are provided safe, clean, dry and comfortable environments for dairy cattle.

Nutrition: Proper nutrition through age-appropriate diets is provided to all animals.

Animal Health: Dairy farms have a Herd Health Plan emphasizing prevention, rapid diagnosis and quick decision making on necessary treatment of all sick or injured dairy cattle on the farm, including regularly scheduled veterinarian checks of the herd.

^b Animal Care Definition: The treatment that an animal receives is covered by terms such as animal care, animal husbandry, and humane treatment. World Organisation for Animal Health Terrestrial Animal Code Chapter 7.1 http://www.oie.int/index.php?id=169&L=0&htmlfile=chaptre_aw_introduction.htm

^c An example "Employee Code of Conduct" is available through the See it? Stop it! Program. www.seeitstopit.org/materials

^d "FARM Program Protocol Following Allegations of Willful Mistreatments of Animals" www.nationaldairyfarm.com/sites/default/files/FARM-Program-Protocol-Willful-Animal-Mistreatment-092314.pdf



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Non-Ambulatory Dairy Cattle: Dairy farms adhere to the proper procedures for handling non-ambulatory dairy cattle including utilizing special equipment for injured and non-ambulatory animals, and specially trained caretakers are available to care for such animals' needs.

Disbudding and Dehorning: Disbudding is to be completed before eight weeks of age utilizing analgesics that have been agreed on by the dairy farmer and the herd veterinarian.

Tail Docking: We oppose routine tail docking and require it to be phased out within the timeframe consistent with the FARM program.

Veterinary Oversight: Dairy farms have evidence of an established, documented relationship with a veterinarian, through a Veterinarian Client Patient Relationship (VCPR).

D. Implementation/Measurement

[Company Name] recognizes that the majority of the dairy industry participates in the FARM Animal Care Program and supports the program's goals of continuous improvement. We expect our suppliers to regularly report on their implementation of the FARM program and other data as appropriate.