

Efforts Under Way To Enhance Animal Care

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.)—Speaking before the 79th annual meeting of the Livestock Conservation Institute in Kansas City, Mo., in early May, Penn State Professor of Animal Science Lowell L. Wilson outlined three major efforts over the past two years by the dairy and veal industries to enhance animal care on the nation's farms.

The major thrusts of these efforts, which have resulted in formalized guidelines for the care and handling of dairy cattle (including calves) on the nation's dairy, veal and dairy-beef farms, include (1) providing checklists for farmers to evaluate and improve their cattle care, handling, and management programs and facilities; (2) decreasing the possibility of voids in health care and management which could result in lower performance, production, animal well-being, or profitability or greater frequency of mortality, morbidity, injuries or violative chemical residues; and (3) increasing public knowledge of the specific science-based recommendations for animal care on dairy and veal farms.

Listed below are three publications that have been either created or updated as a result of this work.

"Guide for the Care and Production of Veal Calves": The profitability of special-fed veal and dairy-beef production depends to a large extent on the health, quality, and potential growth performance of the calves entering the veal or dairy-beef feeding program. This booklet—revised in 1981, 1987, 1990, and 1994—is designated for use by special-fed veal producers, although many of the practices also are useful for dairy-beef calf starters. It is distributed by the American Veal Association upon request and was provided to all of its members. Primary funding for this effort was provided by the National Beef

Promotion and Research Board through the Veal Total Quality Management Education Program. Sections include discussions on:

- Facilities (buildings, waste handling, storage, disposal and recycling; ventilation and humidity; individual stalls; group pens; emergency and safety precautions);

- Feed storage area and feeding, watering, and cleaning systems;

- Facility preparation and maintenance and other biosecurity measures;

- Calf care at the dairy farm and obtaining calves;

- Care of veal calves upon arrival at the barn;

- Examination, protection and disposal of the calves;

- Health programs;

- Premarket testing for chemical residues;

- Handling and transportation of veal calves;

- Definition and application of a valid veterinarian-client patient relationship;

- Food and Drug Administration Compliance Policy Guides pertaining to veal production;

- Recommended sources of additional information.

"Calf Care Protocol for Dairy Producers": The veal industry sought to increase communication with the dairy industry to bring about an enhancement of calf health and quality. Communication between veal producers and dairy producers brought about cooperative efforts resulting in a veal/dairy calf task force with representatives from the veal and dairy industries, livestock markets, veterinary associations, and

several universities. After almost two years of meeting as a task force, the calf care protocol was developed and adopted as guidelines for calf health and quality. Some of the key summary points set forth in "Caring For Dairy Animals" for the delivery and management of calves at the dairy farm are:

- Comprehensive dairy herd health program;

- Provide dry, sanitary maternity pens or paddocks;

- Dip navels in 7 percent tincture of iodine as soon as possible after birth;

- Provision of high-quality colostrum within the first two hours after birth and at least three times within the first 18 hours;

- If antibiotics must be used on calves to be marketed, use antibiotics with shorter withdrawal periods (consult a veterinarian);

- Market calves only if they are able to walk unassisted and have a dry navel;

- Market calves between four and eight days of age;

- Transport calves safely and comfortably and handle calves properly whenever moved on the farm or in the market to prevent injuries;

- Follow transportation guidelines, including space requirements.

"Carrying For Dairy Animals": This is a comprehensive 10-point guide presented to the dairy farmer as a reference and as an on-farm evaluation guide, to be completed by the dairy farmer in a self-assessment program in collaboration with a veterinarian or a professional animal scientist. It

should be used as a year-to-year continuing guide to determine changes/improvements in management of the different types of dairy cattle on the farm and the facilities that house them. Sections include:

- Producer and employee attitudes;

- Health care;

- Environment for dairy animals;

- Facilities provided for dairy animals;

- Dairy nutritional care: watering and feeding;

- Milking procedures and equipment;

- Transporting and handling dairy animals;

- Delivery and management of calves;

- Specialized care of sick, hospitalized, non-ambulatory, and dead animals;

- Annual review.

The development and application of animal care guidelines for any species for farm and laboratory use should not be taken to mean that most of these practices are not already in use by the

majority of farmers. The formalization of the guidelines simply provides a convenient and thorough checklist for animal caretakers and forms a basis of communication for continued improvement in animal well-being.

The publications outlined above can be obtained from the following:

- "References Guide for the Care and Production of Veal Calves" 1994. (Lowell L. Wilson, Revision Editor). Available from the American Veal Association, 1804 Naper Blvd., Suite 401, Naperville, IL 60563.

- "Calf Care Protocol for the Dairy Producer" 1994. (Anne Banville and Lowell Wilson, Editors). Developed by the Joint Veal/Dairy Taskforce on Calf Quality. Available from the American Veal Association, 1804 Naper Blvd., Suite 401, Naperville, IL 60563.

- "Caring for Dairy Animals (Reference Guide and On-Farm Evaluation Guide)" 1994. (Kenneth E. Olson, Editor). Available from Agri-Education, Inc., 801 Shakespeare Ave., Stratford, IA 50149.

Fairs Brochure Available

GRATZ (Dauphin Co.) — The Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs (PSACF) announces that a listing of all the agricultural fairs within the state is available in a colorful brochure. Each fair is listed by county, the fair name, the location, a contact phone number, and the date for the 1995 event. For easier reference, the state is divided into four regions.

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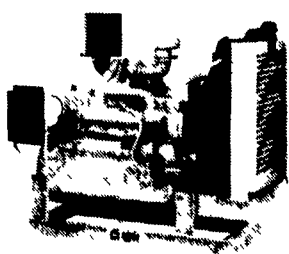
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